This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

http://books.google.com



3839
.25
.363

Library of



Princeton University.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

American Philos. Society Library

MEREDITH;

OR, THE

MYSTERY OF THE MESCHIANZA.

A TALE

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

By the Author of "The Betrothed of Wyoming."

James McHenry

When Freedom roused her patriot band
To drive oppression from the land;
Her foes were strong, their rage was high,
And proud their warlike chivalry.
Oh! then were tried the souls of men,
And many a heart was broken then!

Scrop



PHILADELPHIA:

SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS; AND IN NEW YORK, BOSTON, BALTIMORE, AND WASHINGTON.

1831.

Digitized by Google

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

L. S. BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty-eighth day of December, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1830, Henry H. Porter, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

Meredith; or the Mystery of the Mechianza. A Tale of the American Revolution. By the Author of "The Betrothed of Wyoming."

When Freedom roused her patriot band
To drive oppression from the land;
Her foes were strong, their rage was high,
And proud their warlike chivalry.
Oh! then was tried the souls of men,
And many a heart was broken then!

Scrap Book.

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, intituled, "an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned"—and also to the act, entitled, "an act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Digitized by Google

SOCIETY
LIBRAR

INTRODUCTION.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION!—What a world of glorious ideas are comprehended in that phrase! How thrilling are the recollections it awakens; how triumphant the anticipations it inspires, to gladden the heart of every friend of man!

In contemplating that great event, not only is the imagination struck with its grandeur, but the judgment is satisfied with the soundness of its principles, and benevolence rejoices in its results. The history of nations affords no other great commotion among mankind, so singularly impressive and satisfactory in all respects. It is not the example of successful resistance to arbitrary taxation; it is not the signal defeat given to a powerful and haughty faction, exercising despotic authority, and attempting tyrannical measures; nor is it even the establishment of a pure and equitable system of government in an extensive and flourishing country, that chiefly excites our enthusiasm and challenges admiration. These, it is true, are great and brilliant results; glorious events in a nation's annals; happy items in the ingredients that constitute her prosperity and happiness. But there is nothing peculiar in them. Such

38 39 .25 .363

240253

Digitized by Google

things have happened before. Other nations have resisted oppression, overthrown tyranny, and established rational and just laws. But the American Revolution did more. It sent abroad the voice of freedom and of truth; it proclaimed to all men that they were equal—that tyrant and slave were anomalies in nature, inconsistent with the dictates of reason and the ordinances of God.

The nations have heard and believed. Men have awoke from the slumber of ages; they have thrown off the apathy which held them in subjection. Disenthralled millions have moved in their might, and shaken the foundations of arbitrary rule. A moral earthquake, proceeding from the elements engendered in this country, by the spirit of liberty which animated the patriots of 1776, is in action; and it will not cease until the thrones of despots, together with their authority and their doctrines, be overthrown, and banished for ever from the precincts of emancipated humanity.

Such were the reflections that passed through my mind, as during one of the few bright days which visited Philadelphia in the beginning of December last, I loitered along one of those uninhabited avenues, leading from Spruce to Pine street, in the vicinity of the city Hospital. I was then on my way to visit an interesting character, a patriot and a patriarch, residing in

Digitized by Google

that neighbourhood, who has had the rare fortune to survive his hundredth year. The following dialogue, which took place that morning between the publisher of the novel of "the Betrothed of Wyoming," and myself, will explain the object of my visit to this venerable centenarian.

I had just retired from my breakfast table to my study room, when my respected friend, the worthy bibliopolist aforesaid, was announced. A visit from a bookseller to an author, any time between nine o'clock, A. M. and five P. M., is always ominous of a new book being inflicted upon the world. At any other period of the twenty-four hours, motives of friendship or courtesy, or a desire to gossip, may induce even a bookseller to visit an author. But in the hours of business, time is too valuable in the estimation of gentlemen of *the trade*, to be employed in any thing except business.—But to my dialogue. My publisher, after salutation, seated himself at my bidding, for he is a very complaisant gentleman, and without any unnecessary waste of the precious moments, began:

"I wish another novel from you."

"Very good," I replied. "Wyoming has then proved satisfactory?"

"As much so as I expected," he observed, drily, not wishing to awaken my vanity; for booksellers have, for reasons which may be

Digitized by Google

easily conjectured, a great aversion to arouse the vanity of an author.—"I pushed it, however," he added, "so industriously, that the first edition is gone, and I have another in the press."

"I am truly glad of it," said I; "and shall not dispute whether the credit should be yours or mine. Perhaps we ought to share it. But it is immaterial.—What size of a book do you now wish for?"

"Oh, the other was a very good size," he replied. "It was short but sweet. Let me have a similar one. I dislike long-winded stories; and am truly of Solomon's opinion, that a great book is a great evil. It is generally unreadable; and, what is worse, it is generally unsaleable. Give me a neat little handy volume of a *moving* character, that will not lie drowsily upon my shelves, as if fixed there as much by the unwieldiness of its bulk, as the gravity of its contents. And, hark ye, Mr. Novelist, let it be truly American, and historical; and descriptive, if you please, of the spirit-stirring times of our glorious Revolution."

"I admire your patriotism," said I; "and shall endeavour to make the work such as you desire. But there is one thing necessary to make it valuable, which you have forgot to mention, namely, the amount of the author's

Digitized by Google

compensation. It is but reasonable to expect that the more liberal the reward, the better will be the performance."

"Ah! true," he replied; "what are your terms?"

"My terms," said I.—But the conversation became here too interestingly confidential for public exposure. The good natured reader will, therefore, restrain his curiosity, and be satisfied with the information, that, after some discussion, the terms were settled, and my shrewd and enterprising publisher, having exacted a promise that I should proceed immediately with the work, made his bow, and withdrew to exercise his sagacity on some other speculation.

Having thus undertaken to produce a new work, I felt it incumbent on me without delay, to set about collecting materials. Where I should find them, was now the question. To construct a tale purely from the workings of my own imagination, would be comparatively easy. Invention would furnish me with materials at will. I should not be obliged to leave my chamber, or, perhaps, to consult a single book. But my employer wanted a work of a different description—a romance of an historical character, and connected, too, with a portion of history with which few liberties could be taken; because it is better known to the

Digitized by Google

American people than any other in the annals of mankind, their own happy Revolution.

In writing such a work, the excursions of fancy must be circumscribed within the limits, not of probability only, but of consistency with well-known facts. Incidents, and scenes, and characters, and manners, it is true, may be invented or embellished, yet not arbitrarily according to the will or caprice of the author, but in conformity with transactions already recorded, manners, customs, and characters already delineated, and scenes that may be yet visited. Public events must not be distorted, their dates must not be changed, nor the places where they occurred erroneously described. Accuracy in these particulars requires research, and frequent application to authentic sources of information. Hence the peculiar labour and difficulty of writing the historical romance. Writing that which is altogether fictitious, is comparatively a pastime. It is true, that when the difficulty is overcome, and the task accomplished, the satisfaction is proportionably great. Truth and fiction combine their charms to lighten the labour of production; and the consciousness of having performed what required both dexterity and exertion for its accomplishment, is always a matter of self-congratulation.

These reflections suggested the propriety of inquiring of some of the yet surviving con-

Digitized by Google

temporaries of the revolutionary struggle, relative to such of its unpublished occurrences as came under their own observation, of sufficient importance for my purpose. Many venerable individuals still exist in this city, from whom I was aware I could obtain abundance of information. The aged patriot whom I have already mentioned, was one of these; and for various reasons I considered him the most eligible for my inquiries. He had been a subaltern in the army of Washington, and consequently had been a partaker in the sufferings, as well as the glories of the trying period. He had been wounded in the battle of Brandywine, and taken prisoner at that of Germantown. For a great portion of the time, therefore, that the British army possessed our fraternal city, he was a captive within its walls; but, as he himself states, not very strictly confined. His opportunities, therefore, of acquiring such knowledge as I wanted, were all that could be wished, and I had reason to believe he had not neglected them. Besides, I know him to be a very Nestor, not only in years, but in the communicative spirit which he possesses in relation to past times. Conversing about the Revolution, and the part he had acted in it, which, in his own opinion, was one of no small importance, is, in fact, his hobby, and he rides

Digitized by Google

it with as much dexterity and enthusiasm as any Uncle Toby that ever existed.

When I visited him on this occasion, I found him in a situation truly picturesque and interesting. He was seated at his fire-side, in his arm-chair, surrounded, like the antiquated veteran, in the farce of 102, with his progeny down to the fourth or fifth generation. It was a scene calculated to awaken stirring sensations. When I looked at him, I thought of a hoary oak of the forest that had weathered many a storm, and was now surrounded by numerous flourishing saplings that sheltered its enfeebled age from the assaulting elements. He had done his duty during a long period of manly activity, and imparted to his posterity the proud consciousness of having had a virtuous and patriotic progenitor, whose days had been unusually lengthened in the land which he had contributed to render free.

As nothing could please this patriarchial veteran more than to solicit him for information relative to *the trying times*, the incidents of which were indelibly implanted in his memory, my visit was very well received, and my interrogatories answered with much readiness and good will. At length he observed, that if I wished to publish any thing on the subject, there was in possession of one of his grandsons, a scrivener in Ninth street, a man-

Digitized by Google

uscript account of a series of adventures chiefly connected with the occupation of Philadelphia by the British army, which might answer my purpose. I eagerly caught at this information, and impelled by anxiety to peruse the manuscript, I soon took my leave of the good old Nestor, and hastened to the residence of his grandson. This latter gentleman produced the manuscript without hesitation.

"It is the production," said he, "of Mr. Adam Ballantyne, a man to whose memory I owe much respect. He was the owner of this house, in which he died about twenty years ago, at an advanced age. He rented the property to my wife's father in consideration of being supplied with subsistence during his life. At his death he bequeathed it to my wife, who had attended to his comforts with much tenderness and assiduity during his latter years. These papers also became her property by his verbally desiring her, in his last moments, to preserve them from destruction. Whether he ever intended them for publication, does not appear. Although written with tolerable accuracy of language, and all the marks of scholarship, they do not seem to me, in their present state, to be well adapted for publication. There is no gracefulness in their accuracy, and their scholarship is too technical to be agreeable. They abound with incidents and reflec-

Digitized by Google

tions. But the incidents are not wrought into a connected narrative, and the reflections are often too theological and abstruse. Yet, with all their faults, I believe, that, on perusing these papers, you will find them to contain ample materials for the construction of a narrative which might be made interesting to every reader who can sympathize in the hopes and fears, and sufferings, which agitated our ancestors during the severe struggle they maintained in achieving the independence and liberties we now enjoy."

Having obtained permission to make use of such materials as the manuscripts thus placed in my hands might afford, suitable for my intended work, I hastened home with my prize; for such, in the elation of the moment, I considered it. Nor was my opinion respecting its value changed on perusal. It contained a mass of information concerning the *olden time* in and about Philadelphia, which would have been a treasure to my worthy friend Mr. Watson, when compiling that most instructive and curious of all American books, (not excepting even Knickerbocker's renowned history,) the Annals of Philadelphia. What I supposed would be a treasure to Mr. Watson, I naturally looked upon as valuable to myself. I therefore, much to the satisfaction of my polite friend, the scrivener, set about re-modelling the valuable

Digitized by Google

production, in order to fit it for the public eye.

The work was written in the form of an unconnected and desultory journal of events, interlarded with numerous and tedious comments and speculations, strongly smacking of the mysterious doctrines of Calvin respecting free-will and necessity. Indeed, it would appear that the eccentric Napoleon himself, was not a more strenuous believer in fatalism, than the unpretending Adam Balantyne.

Among the many other modifications I have made on the work, I have thrown it out of the journalizing style, and reduced it to the form of a connected narrative. The events, therefore, which were originally related in the first person, are now told in the third. Many frivolous incidents, and long prosing reflections, are omitted; while, in order to impart to the work some regularity of design and consistency of execution, great liberties are taken with Mr. Balantyne's arrangement of its contents. So that, all things considered, my excellent friend, the scrivener himself, could scarcely discover any resemblance between the crude mass of writing which he put into my hands, and the historical narrative, which, as soon as printed I shall place in his. That the changes I have wrought upon it have greatly improved it, is a point firmly settled with myself, and I believe

Digitized by Google

that the sagacious scrivener will cordially subscribe to my opinion. Whether with all my improvements, it is worthy of being laid before the public, the public itself must judge; and to its august decision, I now submit with due deference and profound respect.

Philadelphia, Jan. 1st. 1831.

Digitized by Google

AMERICAN SOCIETY LIBRARY

MEREDITH.

CHAPTER I.

Passion! thou chainless fury! to what depths
Of dire perdition, dost thou drive the man
Who gives thee entertainment!

Sedley.

I know not whether any philosopher has ever made the observation, that, the heart which is the most susceptible of gratitude, is also the most readily excited to revenge. But it is a truth which, for its confirmation, requires not the testimony of philosophers. It has human nature for its foundation, and experience for its support. Indeed it is reasonable to suppose that he who is very sensible of kindness will be equally so of injuries. Both feelings spring from the same source, acuteness of sensation. Hence the frequent saying in relation to a man of sensibility, that he is either a very warm friend, or a very bitter enemy. There are indeed exceptions. But to what rule is there not? There may be, nay, there actually are, kind and amiable people whose sensibilities are altogether on the side of good nature. But

Digitized by Google

these are generally tame and inefficient beings, who are either devoid of sagacity to see when they are injured, or destitute of courage to show resentment.

Such was not Adam Balantyne, the worthy and able master of a classical academy, which, sixty years ago, flourished near the village of Dilworth on the banks of the Brandywine.

Balantyne was a man of sensibilities almost morbidly acute. He was kind, benevolent, and rigidly honourable. The poor and oppressed always shared his aid and commanded his sympathy, while the splendid and the haughty, were the objects of his aversion or contempt.

Balantyne was a native of Scotland, and descended of a respectable family which had long flourished in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock, in Ayrshire. Being a younger son, he knew from his earliest days, that on his own exertions alone must he depend for subsistence. He, therefore, industriously availed himself of the opportunity which his father afforded him, of acquiring a good classical education, and in due time entered the University of Glasgow, with the view of becoming a minister of the Scottish church.

Possessing all the characteristic good sense and industrious habits of his countrymen, Balantyne's progress in learning, and his correctness

Digitized by Google

of deportment while at college, were all that his friends could wish, and afforded promising omens of his future comfort and respectability in life. His studies, however, were chiefly of that theological and mathematical description, which tends more to store the mind with abstract knowledge, and strengthen the moral and religious feelings, than to enlarge the understanding, impart experience of the world, or refine the taste and polish the manners. In short, although not exactly qualified to shine in a world where showy talents and bustling accomplishments, rather than strict integrity and solid acquirements, are the instruments of success, he was well fitted for the quiet and useful profession he had chosen; and had the fairest prospects of passing a contented and happy life as the venerated pastor of some peaceful congregation in his native land.

But destiny had otherwise ordered it; for according to his own frequent and forcible saying:

> Let a man do what he will,
> Fortune will be fortune still.

The first thing that seriously disturbed the mind of Balantyne, and produced any agitation in the even tenor of his course, was that feeling which almost invariably creates the earliest important commotion in the lives of men, namely, love. From the same feeling also proceeded all the untoward events which em-

Digitized by Google

bittered his latter days. Yet, Oh! love—thou divine, but mysterious passion! let me not do injustice to thee! If to Balantyne thou wert the cause of long and acute suffering, thou wert also the source of unspeakable joys. Thou gavest to his arms, in holy wedlock, a being on whom he doated almost to sinfulness, for he adored her as, his conscience often told him, his Maker alone should be adored, with the whole intensity of his heart—the whole energy of his soul.

This beloved being was a native of Perthshire, and had come to Glasgow, where she had some affluent relations, for the completion of her education. Balantyne was in the last year of his studentship, when he became acquainted with her. The susceptibility of his feelings has been already mentioned. The impression made upon them by the charms of Mary Stuart, (for that was the name of the lovely one of whom we are speaking,) were never, while life lasted, to be effaced. He wooed her affections, and he gained them. But their marriage was, for the present, opposed by her father. In about two years, however, Balantyne had the good fortune to receive a call to the ministry of a very respectable congregation at Crieff, in the vicinity of the residence of his beloved, whom shortly after his

Digitized by Google

ordination, he had the happiness of making his own.

The felicity of our young clergyman continued uninterrupted for nearly three years, in which time he was made the delighted father of a blooming daughter, the perfect image of her mother. But then there came a blight—a cruel, incurable blight, upon the too exquisite happiness of the sensitive Balantyne. The charms of his young and lovely wife, had attracted the attention and awakened the licentious passions of a gay officer of a band of military stationed at Crieff, who immediately formed the resolution, in despite of all consequences, to gain her over to his wishes. Her virtue, however, prevailed against his arts; and he was foiled in every attempt to seduce her affections. But aware of the sensitive feelings of her husband, she was unwilling to inflict upon them a wound so severe as she knew would follow a disclosure of the unhallowed attempts that had been made upon her fidelity. She concealed them, therefore, in her own breast, at the same time taking every precaution to avoid giving the officer an opportunity of repeating his insults. But lieutenant Hazelton, was too deeply enamoured, and too slightly imbued with either moral or honourable principles, to be deterred from his pursuit by the proofs he had received of her inflexible virtue.

Digitized by Google

He soon discovered that she had not apprised her husband of his conduct. From this circumstance, he augured favourably of his final success. He now determined to ingratiate himself into Balantyne's good opinion, by affecting seriousness and piety. The unsuspecting clergyman thought him sincere, and admitted him to his intimacy.

Mrs. Balantyne herself began to be less alarmed at his presence. He had by letter assured her that he exceedingly regretted his behaviour towards her; and she believed it possible that he might be really sincere in his professions of reform. Still she entertained sufficient doubts to render her vigilant and guarded against any renewal of his misconduct. Her reserve but inflamed his desires. His impatience became too strong for restraint; and he, at length, since he found artifice ineffectual, began to meditate violence. For this purpose, he secretly watched her movements, followed her in her walks, and even lay in wait around her dwelling, to discover when she might be solitary, and unprotected by her husband or domestics.

Alas! that wickedness should ever triumph! But such is the ordination of Providence. It is to us mysterious that it should be so. But we have only imperfect conceptions of the final result of things. With such conceptions we

Digitized by Google

cannot but feel troubled when the wicked succeed in guilt, and are permitted, for the gratification of their criminal purposes, to destroy the happines of the innocent. If, in our trouble, we should grieve at the existence of undeserved calamity, we trust that the limited conceptions with which the Dispenser of all gifts, has endowed us, will be admitted in extenuation. It is surely natural to deplore whatever appears to us unmerited evil, although it be presumptuous and sinful to doubt that it tends to a just and beneficent end.

The unrelenting wolf seized the lamb by surprise, when the shepherd was away, and the fold unguarded. Mr. Balantyne was absent on professional business. He had but two men servants, who were both gone on some distant duty. A female servant alone remained at home with her mistress. Lieutenant Hazelton found means to attach this girl to his interest. The opportunity was tempting. He embraced it. At his approach, the girl withdrew from the house, and left her mistress to receive him alone, which she did with dignified but constrained composure.

"My dear madam," said he, "excuse my bold intrusion at this happy moment. I have been so long banished from your society that I have on this occasion, resolved to encounter all hazards to be alone with you, if but for an in-

Digitized by Google

stant, that I may ascertain whether there be no possibility of softening your feelings towards me."

"Do you mean, Sir," she replied, "to repeat your former insults? If so, I shall be obliged to call my servant to my protection, and have your base conduct exposed to the world."

"Your servant," he observed, pointing to a window which looked into a lawn of considerable extent, "you perceive is beyond your hearing. Your husband and your other domestics, I know, are all at a distance, and cannot interrupt our interview. Be patient, therefore, while I say that my passion for you is as ardent as ever."

"Lieutenant Hazelton," said she, "do you not consider this conduct dishonourable? Your intrusion, under the circumstances you describe, is mean, and may, in the eyes of an ill-judging world, be injurious to my reputation. I beseech you, therefore, if you have any regard whatever for my welfare, to show it by immediately departing from this house."

"What!" he exclaimed, "shall I forego an opportunity of happiness like this! No, by heavens, loveliest of women, you know not the extent of my passion, nor the terrible lengths to which it is capable of driving me, or you would not ask it. Oh! resist me not—

Digitized by Google

rather sooth, and molify, and quiet the burning that is within me—the flames enkindled by thy beauty, or I shall become distracted—frantic—mad—unfit to answer for my conduct. Oh! drive me not to violence!"

Seeing determination in his countenance, as well as fury in his words, she was seized with despair; she grasped a kitchen knife which lay on a table near her. But she was irresolute to use it, and he soon wrested it from her. The scene became appalling. I shall cease the description. A terrible crime was perpetrated, and the happiness of Mr. Balantyne in this world had terminated for ever. He returned to receive the heart-rending account of the fatal calamity from the pale and trembling lips of a dying wife. She breathed her last in his embrace. He took his infant daughter in his arms. He laid her beside her dead mother. The child placed its little hand gently on the cheek now insensible to its pressure. The father thought of the murderous worker of that terrible change—the spirit of revenge seized his whole soul. The meekness of the Christian—the forbearance and the magnanimity of the clergyman were forgotten—the feelings of the man, the lover, the husband—the outraged, the bereaved—the cruelly bereaved husband, raged furiously in his bosom, and triumphed over wisdom, patience and Christian duty.

Digitized by Google

The destiny of Balantyne was changed, and so seemed his nature. He imprinted one long kiss on the lips of his wife and child. He then hastened to a closet, whence he took two pistols, and loaded them. He then wrote as follows to his father-in-law.

"I go in search of vengeance or of death. Either or both will be welcome. Take care of my child!"

He proceeded to the quarters of Hazelton. He was not there. But he told the tale of his grief, and the intention of his visit, to another officer, whom he requested to convey a challenge to the murderer. The officer readily undertook the task, expressing his admiration of the courageous magnanimity of the clergyman who sought satisfaction in this chivalrous manner, rather than, by bringing the criminal to the bar of justice, reduce him to the disgrace, which he justly deserved, of dying as a felon.

"Haste to the murderer," cried Balantyne. "Bring him to my presence. No hand but mine must inflict upon him the vengeance for which the spirit of my murdered saint so loudly calls. Oh! I burn for justice! The operations of the law would be too slow to allay the fever of revenge that glows within me, and agonizes my whole frame!"

"I admire your energy and your courage—"

"Speak not of my courage!" exclaimed

Digitized by Google

Balantyne, impatiently interrupting the officer. "I have none, for death will be welcome to me. Only let me destroy the fiend who has murdered my beloved, and I shall even be glad to receive death at his hands, that my fate may be like hers. Haste on thy errand, if ye have any compassion for my wretchedness."

"The villain shall meet you," said the officer, "and that, too, immediately. If he refuse, I will brand him as a coward, spit in his face, and drag him by the hair into your presence."

In about fifteen minutes the meeting took place. The culprit approached the injured husband, pale, trembling and conscience-struck. Until informed by the officer, he knew not that Mrs. Balantyne, whom he had left in a state of indescribable mental agony, was actually dead. The news struck him like a thunderbolt to the heart; and, in passive silence, he attended his conductor to the presence of the avenger.

"Ha! comest thou, fiend of destruction!" cried the enfuriated Balantyne, in tones that made the criminal tremble in every joint. "I am commissioned by Eternal Justice, as the avenger of blood. But I will not destroy thee defenceless. Take either of these weapons, and kill me, and end the wretchedness thou hast caused; for whether thou dost or not, by my hand thou shalt assuredly die!"

Digitized by Google

Hazelton spoke not—he scarcely raised his eyes from the ground. But he took one of the pistols. The officer separated the opponents ten paces, gave the signal, and Hazelton fell to the earth with his death-wound, without having lifted his weapon against his adversary.

"God of mercy!" exclaimed Balantyne, when he heard the groans of the fallen criminal, and saw that he had not defended himself. "I am a murderer!—I have embrued my hands in the blood of a human being! My wretchedness is complete—for I am an offender against Heaven!"

His words failed him. He groaned bitterly. All his desire of vengeance, and with it, all his energy had fled. His eyes rolled fearfully in their sockets. The light left them. His teeth chattered, his hands became clenched, his knees trembled and bent under him, and he fell upon the ground convulsed with the most intense pangs of terror and remorse.

Hazelton looked up and saw his pitiable state. "I am the author of all this calamity," he cried. "My death is approaching. I am justly slain. Tell that good man, that he has not committed a murder, but a righteous act; and inform my friends, that it is my dying request, that he shall not be prosecuted. Oh! what a change from the innocence and happi-

Digitized by Google

ness of yesterday, to the guilt and wretchedness of to-day! Oh! beware; beware of hearkening to the suggestions of unruly passions!" —So saying, he caught the hand of the officer with a death-grasp, and expired.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?

Shakspeare.

The agony of remorse in the mind of Balantyne, being thus superadded to the pangs of grief, threw him into an alarming fever, accompanied with frightful delirium. The care of his friends, however, and the natural vigour of his constitution, carried him safely through this complication of bodily and mental suffering. But it was not until the lapse of several weeks, that his delirium subsided sufficiently to permit such an exercise of the memory as enabled him to form an accurate conception of what had happened. Since the occurrence of the fatal events until the taking place of this favourable crisis, a continual chaos of distressing images had agitated his mind, and communicated to his ravings the terrific wildness of maniacal frenzy. Time, however, the great soother of all sorrow, gradually restored him to health and tranquillity, though not to happiness. His daughter was now the sole object of his attachment; and on her account only, was he desirous

Digitized by Google

to live. Indeed, except in what concerned her, he felt no interest in the affairs of the world; but for her sake, he was willing to struggle, for some time longer, with the miseries of an undesirable existence.

On recovering sufficiently to bear the fatigue of a journey, he felt it necessary to withdraw from scenes which perpetually reminded him of his former happiness and his present misery. He, therefore, removed with his daughter, to the place of his birth, in expectation that the revival of youthful associations, might mitigate the severity of the grief which preyed upon his heart. Time and the attention of his friends, aided this change of scene, and restored his feelings to, at least, a partial state of tranquillity. But to remove his grief altogether, was out of the question. It had taken too firm a hold on his heart. Like an instrument of torture it had grappled too fiercely with his feelings, not to leave behind deep and permanent vestiges of its power. Who, indeed, has endured a calamity like his, that could ever forget it? Nor was it the calamity alone that rendered his reflections tormenting. His conscience told him that he was guilty of blood; that he had slain a human being; thereby infringing the majesty of the law, and snatching from offended justice, the sword which she alone ought to wield. In vain did his friends urge, when at-

Digitized by Google

tempting to sooth the stings of the compunctious visitings that festered in his bosom, that the injury he had sustained was so peculiar and so aggravated, as to form an extenuation, approaching almost to a justification, of the punishment he had inflicted on the perpetrator of the horrible outrage that had destroyed his happiness; and that, although he had acted under the influence of feelings driven almost to madness, he had regulated his conduct by the most rigid rules of honour. The verdict of the world was therefore in his favour; and while all liberal minds commiserated his misfortunes, they awarded him applause rather than censure for the manliness of his proceedings.

These suggestions had little other effect than what proceeded from the kindness which they manifested on the part of his friends, in tranquillizing his mind. The idea of having destroyed human life, was intolerable to his contemplations. The sense of the injury he had endured daily became weaker, while that of the deed he had committed waxed stronger. Time may be a curer of grief, but it is no remedy for remorse. The heart which is innocent may become resigned to remediless misfortune, but every recollection of guilt is a renewal of torment and terror.

The sorrows of Balantyne had, as may well be supposed, incapacitated him for his profes-

Digitized by Google

sional duties. Time, therefore, by lying heavily on his hands, contributed greatly to preserve his thoughts in the melancholy direction they had taken. He became, at length, sensible that idleness but fostered the malady that tormented him, and, if relief from his sufferings was at all to be obtained, it could only be from occupation. He had been advised to travel; and he began to believe that remoteness from the land of his misfortunes, if it should not obliterate their remembrance, might, at least, weaken their impression.

With this view he turned his eyes towards the North American colonies, then beginning to acquire a high degree of importance in the estimation of the people of Europe. The colony of Pennsylvania, in particular, was viewed with much interest, on account of the wise and humane policy of its institutions, the benevolent and peaceful character of its principal settlers, and the rapid growth and prosperity of its chief city. To this land, therefore, which to the imagination of Balantyne, seemed a new Arcadia just arisen in a virgin world, as yet unstained with those crimes and calamities, the memorials of which met him at every step in his native island, he resolved to go, and endeavour to bury, amidst its tranquil shades, all recollections of the disasters and sorrows with which he had been so severely tried. All his effects were

Digitized by Google

soon turned into money. A passage was secured in a vessel bound from Greenock to Philadelphia, and the heart-rent Balantyne, accompanied by his child and her nurse, bade adieu to his early friends and his native land for ever.

After a tedious passage of ten weeks, the fugitive from sorrow was landed in October 1764, at Newcastle. He made but a short stay in that place, nor did he explore the country long in search of a residence. His imagination had long figured to him some sequestered spot amidst the peaceful shades of Pennsylvania, as his destined home, where he should enjoy tranquillity of mind, and watch over the tender years of his daughter, drawing comfort from her evolving intellect, her innocent cheerfulness, and her filial attention. He, therefore, hastened at once beyond the line of Delaware, and on entering Pennsylvania, he almost felt, so strong was the power of long-cherished imaginings, as if he trod on charmed ground. He resolved to wander no farther in search of an abode. He heard of a small plantation which was for sale in the vicinity. He visited it. It was situated on the north bank of the Brandywine; and the neat dwelling that was upon it, appearing to his fancy both secluded and picturesque, he resolved that it should be the termination of his pilgrimage.

Digitized by Google

He became its purchaser, and hiring a couple of servants as cultivators of his small farm, his mind became tranquilized in the possession of a home which seemed to be beyond the reach of any of those stormy currents of life which agitate and beset the more busy and populous districts of mankind.

His daughter was at this time about five years of age, healthy, lively, interesting and faultlessly beautiful. Many a long look of parental fondness and solicitude, did Balantyne take of this dear relic of his days of happiness; and many a solitary hour did he pass in meditating on her present state of innocence and freedom from care, and in praying to Heaven that it might never be reversed by any calamities.

Neither the education nor habits of Balantyne had qualified him for secular business, and his heaviness of heart, rendered him still more indisposed for active exertions as a husbandman, than he might otherwise have been. In a few years, he became weary of attending to the affairs of his plantation. He rented it, therefore, to one of his servants, retaining in his own possession only the dwelling house with a few surrounding acres. He now gave himself up entirely to studious habits, and to the education of his daughter. Such a course of life, however, was soon found to produce injurious

Digitized by Google

effects on both his mind and his body. His health began to give way, and the remembrance of the deed which occasioned his remorse, returned with almost its former violence.

It happened, fortunately for Balantyne, that he had for some time past attracted the sympathy of a benevolent and intelligent Quaker, resident in the neighbourhood, who courted his intimacy, and gained his confidence. The name of this respectable member of the peaceful sect, was Elias Meredith. He had been made acquainted with the story of Balantyne's sorrows, and he felt a strong interest in his welfare. He became grieved to witness the daily increase of the melancholy that preyed upon one he esteemed; and he had the sagacity to perceive that want of occupation afforded the heart-burning malady an unobstructed opportunity to commit its ravages.

"Friend Balantyne," said he one day that he found the latter labouring under an unusual depression of mind, "thee knowest that I feel for thy condition. I will, therefore, venture to give thee advice, which, I believe, thou wilt take in good part, whether thou wilt adopt it or not. I have observed, that thy heaviness of spirit hath increased greatly, since thou hast given up attending to worldly matters. Thee attendest to no business, and thee

Digitized by Google

followest no amusement. There is nothing, therefore, but thy attention to thy child, to divert thy thoughts from subjects of sorrow. This is not sufficient to preserve either thy body in health, or thy mind in tranquillity. Does thee not think, that a more active life would be better for thee?"

"It might be so," replied Balantyne. "But, alas, I have no energy for such a life. My chief desire is to implant the principles of virtue, and the precepts of wisdom, in the mind of my daughter, and my only enjoyment is to behold them take root and flourish there."

"It is a natural desire—it is a laudable enjoyment," replied his friend. "But I may say unto thee, as the wise man saith, 'The way of the slothful man is a hedge of thorns.' Thee hast found it so; for since thou hast had nothing to do, thou hast been pierced to the quick.—I would advise thee to follow some employment by which thy thoughts may be diverted, and thy time rendered useful."

"I appreciate the wisdom of your advice, and I am aware of your friendly motives," said Balantyne. "But I am reluctant to relinquish meditations which, however painful to my heart, and detrimental to my health, are sacred to my imagination; while to the sorrows they inflict, I feel it a duty to submit as to a penalty due for my transgressions. And to

Digitized by Google

what end should I employ myself in the affairs of the world? I am unskilled in its ways, and have no relish for its doings. If I were to embark on its current, having neither energy nor experience to direct my course, I should in all probability, be baffled in my efforts, and perhaps, lose the little competence with which Providence has supplied me for the use of my child."

"I would not have thee undertake what thee knowest not how to perform," answered the prudent Quaker. "But I know thee has skill in many things. Thee is a learned man, and could teach the youth of the country, by which thee might become useful to thy neighbours, and increase thy own provision; whilst thy mind would be employed on subjects that would not, as now, render thee miserable."

"I should, indeed, wish to be useful in that way," said Balantyne; "but I fear I am incapable of undergoing the drudgery of such an employment. And I know not whether I should sufficiently evince my attachment to the memory of my beloved wife, if I were to permit any other subject of contemplation to occupy her place. No; thou beatified spirit of my murdered saint! thy husband shall never cease to contemplate thy virtues and deplore thy loss!"

"Friend Balantyne," said Elias, "thee seems, at present, too much affected to receive

Digitized by Google

the counsel I would give thee. But if thee will be calm I will reason with thee. Does thee think that thy wife's spirit knows what thee now does or feels?"

"I would not for worlds believe otherwise," answered Balantyne. "To hold, in imagination, that communion with her, of which in her home of bliss, I feel her to be conscious, lends to my heart the sweetest throb that my earthly existence can afford."

"Thee is fanciful in thy enjoyments," observed Elias. "But thee knows that thy thinking too much really makes thee unhappy. Besides thee neglects thy duty to thy neighbours, for thee has power to be useful, and I think thee has also the desire. If thee would make an effort, I think thee would become pleased with occupation which would be a relief to thy mind, and profitable in a worldly point of view."

"As to worldly profit," said Balantyne, "I care but little. I have a competence for myself and my child. I have no desire for splendour; I have no ambition for power. What then would the accumulation of riches avail me?"

"Thee mistakes me," said Elias; "I would not have thee to be industrious altogether from mercenary views. But, as I said before, thee has a duty to perform. Thee can be useful,

Digitized by Google

and should not permit the talent that is given thee to remain unprofitable."

"Your remarks, I acknowledge, are just," said Balantyne. "There is wisdom in your speech, but, alas, as you cannot feel what I feel, you cannot judge as I judge. Yet I am pleased with the interest you take in my concerns, and am thankful that there is one man in the land wherein I am a stranger, who wishes too see me happy."

"I am, indeed, interested in thy welfare," said his friend, "and as thee takes my interference in good part, I do not despair of being useful to thee. The spirit of thy wife, now in Heaven, feels, as thee believes, an interest in thy present well-being, and in that of thy child:—does thee not wish thy conduct to have her approbation?"

"Truly I do; and I trust it has;" replied Balantyne. thou art

"I fear ~~thee is~~ mistaken," said Elias; "a blessed spirit like hers never can approve of grieving uselessly, or of living uselessly."

"Ah! what hast thou said?" asked Balantyne with emotion. "That touches me sorely. Can she disapprove of my grief, when it is for her I grieve? or can life be spent uselessly, which is spent in penitence for a deed of rashness and of guilt?"

"Friend Balantyne," said Elias, calmly, but

Digitized by Google

firmly, "I wish not to inflame but to sooth the wounds of thy mind. Bethink thee that thy wife is now happy. Does thee grieve for that?"

"Oh! no—I should not," ejaculated Balantyne, thoughtfully. "Perhaps I have been sinful in grieving so much."

"As to thy deed of rashness," continued the Quaker; "can thee think that by the guilt of ruining thy health, and, perhaps, shortening thy life, thou canst atone for it? Assuredly one crime cannot be propitiated by the commission of another. Thee is a Christian, and knows where lies the true propitiation for sins. Thee is a divine, and art aware that amendment and utility of life, rather than lamentation and penance, are the acceptable offerings to the Deity."

"My sincere friend and counsellor," cried Balantyne, catching the Quaker by the hand, "thou speakest truth. I delight to hear thee."

At that moment his little Mary, for his daughter bore the name of her mother, came into the apartment, and ran smiling towards her father. He caught her in his arms, and affectionately embraced her. His friend availed himself of the incident.

"It is for that child's sake as well as thy own," said he, "that I would counsel thee. She is now lively, cheerful and happy. She is

Digitized by Google

yet too young to have caught any of thy mournful manner. But a short time will enable her to perceive thy affliction. If thou throw it not off, she will feel for thee, grieve with thee, and become as unhappy as thyself. For her sake, therefore, suppress thy discontent; cast off thy gloom. Set her an example of industry, and, if thee can, of cheerfulness, and her mother's spirit will undoubtedly bless thee."

"Ah! you have touched a chord that thrills through my heart," cried Balantyne. "Best of my friends, you have prevailed. I shall endeavour to forget my sorrows; and if I should not mix much with the world, I shall endeavour to be useful to it. I am resolved to adopt your suggestions, and become an instructor of youth, so that whatever else my conscience may lay to my charge, it shall not henceforth have to accuse me of idleness."

Balantyne kept his resolution. He established, convenient to his residence, a classical Academy, where many of the youths of that day, who afterwards became active in the busy scenes that agitated the country, received those stores of knowledge, and that cultivation of intellect, which enabled them to acquit themselves with so much ability, amidst the important scenes in which they became involved.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

Though deep thy woes—though fiercely the decree
Which doom'd our race to sorrow, falls on thee;
Think not thou bear'st the common lot alone;
I too the point of sorrow's shaft have known;
Perhaps, not with such venomed force, the dart
Has carried vengeance to my bleeding heart:
Yet gladly have I sought and found the cure
Which softens pain, or strengthens to endure;—
'Tis that our thoughts and energies be given,
On earth to duty, and to hope in Heaven!

Scrap Book.

The good Elias, from whose judicious counsel Balantyne soon derived all the benefits that had been anticipated, had himself experienced the grief which springs from the loss of those we love. His misfortunes had not, indeed, been attended with the peculiar horrors which marked those of the unhappy Balantyne. Neither was his mind of that imaginative character, which loves to picture to itself, in the strongest colours, whatever of good or evil may befall it. He knew the condition of man on earth was liability to fluctuations between good and evil, between happiness and misery; and that the uncertainty of the duration of either, nay, of life itself, was so well established, that a wise man should have the probability of change in his condition so familiarised to his mind, as never to be taken by surprise, and thrown into too much elation by good, or too much depresssion by bad fortune.

Digitized by Google

Early habits have, indeed, immense influence in forming the character. It is true, they cannot altogether eradicate the natural disposition. They have neither the omnipotent power ascribed to them by one set of philosophers, nor are they so inefficient in their operation on the mind, as is asserted by another. The feelings of Elias were acute, his sympathies strong, and his temper originally irritable. But early instruction had apprised him of the evil effects of indulging these propensities, and habit had accustomed him to exert the power of reflection in controlling them. But it was in resistance to the last mentioned trait, his irritability, that he was taught to make the greatest efforts; and over this he had, by the time he reached the years of manhood, acquired such an ascendency, that no occurrence could provoke him into a display of anger. Resentment and revenge were, in consequence, feelings to which he had long become a stranger. The kindlier impulses were allowed more indulgence, as they generally are by the prudent and peaceful community to which he belonged, because less inimical to that tranquillity of disposition and evenness of conduct, on which they have found the chief portion of human felicity in a turbulent world, like ours, to depend.

And herein lay the great distinction between Elias and Balantyne. The latter could reason

Digitized by Google

as well, and see as clearly the duty and advantages of suppressing the more violent emotions, but he had not in youth been disciplined to the task. He had been well educated, both morally and religiously. The theories of right and wrong, and of wisdom and folly, he well understood, and of the advantage of acting according to their dictates, he was thoroughly convinced. But discipline had not sufficiently trained him to the practice. Habit, therefore, had not rendered it easy.

Thus, while Balantyne was less qualified, from previous preparation, to endure misfortune than his friend, it had fallen upon him with redoubled weight, and in a more aggravated and terrible form. His calamities had been singular, not only in kind but in severity. Those of his more passive and imperturable friend, trying as they were, had not been accompanied by circumstances of such peculiarity; nor had they been of sudden or unexpected occurrence. He had lost the wife of his youth on whom he doated; but she had gone slowly and gradually away, in consumption. He had lost his two only children; but the one had survived its birth only a few weeks, and the other scarcely two years. Bereft of wife and children, he had long felt forlorn in the world; but he had never become discontented with it, nor withdrawn from it his countenance.

Digitized by Google

He still had comforts left for which he was thankful; and for those of which he had been deprived, dearly as he prized them, he dared not murmur.

He continued a widower, for he could not place those affections on another female, which had been so entirely engrossed by her whom he had lost. He possessed a competent estate, lived in comfortable elegance, and notwithstanding the regrets which would sometimes obtrude upon him, his friends, who were numerous, were never rendered uneasy in his society, by any appearance of sullenness or discontent.

The chief object of his solicitude, of late years, was the son of a deceased brother, to whom he had been appointed guardian. At the time Mr. Balantyne established his academy, this youth was about twelve years of age. He resided with his mother, at a short distance from his uncle's. His father had died when he was but two years old; and his mother, who was a native of England, and an Episcopalian, had not implanted in his mind the peculiarly quiescent sentiments, nor trained his manners to the precise habits of his father's sect. Still, as she was a virtuous and intelligent woman, and as all her affections were centered in her Edward, for that was her son's name, she took great care to implant early in his mind, the seeds of sound

Digitized by Google

morality, and to imbue him with a strong sense of the beauty and glory of an honourable life.

This amiable woman was a great favourite with her discreet brother-in-law. After she had become a widow, although young, handsome and affluent, she had rejected several advantageous offers of marriage, having resolved, from respect to the memory of her husband, to admit the addresses of no suitor whatever, but to devote her attention to cultivating the mind, establishing the principles, and forming the manners of her son. Such conduct could not but endear her to the discerning and upright Elias; and although it would have been a source of much satisfaction to him, had his nephew been brought up in the principles of his own sect, yet as he had no pretence to interfere with the rights of so excellent a mother, he had too much good sense, and, towards her, too much good feeling, to make the attempt.

Edward Meredith was one of the first pupils placed under the care of Mr. Balantyne, when that gentleman opened his Academy. Sprightly, gay, and in vigorous health, in love with all the world, and all the world in love with him, no happier being could then exist on this perishable globe, than the light-hearted Edward. Life to him opened, indeed, with a sweetly vernal dawn. Wherever he went, all was smiles and

Digitized by Google

sunshine. The flowers of existence alone caught his attention, as if nothing else was springing up around him—or if a weed or a thorn chanced to obtrude itself in his way, he passed it with heedless indifference, and soon forgot that it had disturbed him.

Thus passed the gay morning of his life, calm and unclouded. But in his sixteenth year, an incident occurred which threatened greatly to agitate the scene, and gave to his bosom the first serious feeling of perplexity and alarm. It was a beautiful evening in the month of May. He had passed the afternoon in his favourite recreation, that of fowling in the woods, and was returning home with about twenty wild pigeons, as the trophies of his success, when, late in the evening, in the vicinity of his mother's residence, he overheard some voices in a thick wood through which he was passing. He approached them cautiously, and heard the following alarming dialogue.

"But, Sir Robert, what if you should be mistaken in the lady after all?"

"I tell you, Frank, it is Matilda. And we are both once more unmarried, for I have ascertained, that the sly Quaker, who carried her off, has thought proper to take himself off, and leave her a rich and buxom widow, with but one son. She and I might yet fulfil the terms of the nabob Colonel's will, and compel Captain Harris to cash back the sicca rupees on which he has so long fattened."

Digitized by Google

"Sir Robert," observed Frank, "think of former times, and despair of success."

"Hang it," cried Sir Robert, "why rub open old sores. She must have forgotten those youthful sallies by this time. I dare say that she can estimate the value of a hundred thousand pounds too well, to reject them on account of a little spleen."

"I doubt it," said Frank. "She was never avaricious; and if this lady be really your cousin, she already enjoys affluence, and will not be tempted by money into a match that she dislikes. Resorting to force will be rather a dangerous matter. She has a strong household of servants; and a stripling son as active as a young colt, and who can point a gun with as good an aim as any rifleman in your company."

"I tell you, Frank," returned Sir Robert, "I'll have no more preaching about it. If she will not comply civilly, I'll have her seized and carried on ship-board, where I will compel her to go through the ceremony, in spite of all the servants and striplings, and broad-brims and buckskins in America. Nay, I know not but this might be the best plan to begin with. By heavens, she looks handsome yet. I gazed at her by stealth to-day until I imagined that my youthful days were returned, and my youthful passions rekindled. But a truce with sentiments. Let us return to our tavern, where we shall remain incog, and mature the matter."

Digitized by Google

"An extremely wise proposal," Sir Robert. "I agree to it with all my heart. There is jolly beverage at the White Buck, which will sharpen our wits."

The speakers departed, and in doing so, afforded Edward a view of their persons, which, however, did not enable him to distinguish them, as they were both carefully muffled in large cloaks. The apprehension of some mischief being plotted against his mother, was naturally excited in his mind. The object of the conspiracy was a lady named Matilda, whose servants were numerous, and who had a son yet a stripling. To his mother alone, of all the ladies he knew, did each of these circumstances apply. He hastened to her. He informed her of the strange dialogue and of his own fears. She became agitated.

"Yes, my son," said she, "you are right. Danger threatens us from a man from whose power I once with difficulty escaped, but from whom I should have supposed that time and distance had now formed an effectual protection. I must immediately confer with your uncle on this emergency.

Elias was sent for, and soon made his appearance. Mrs. Meredith, after informing him of the alarming dialogue which had been overheard by her son, related to him the particulars which are to be found in the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Cherish'd and lov'd, her youthful days were spent
Amidst each earthly blessing but—content,
Each fond adorer fill'd her soul with dread;
At length the gay and flattering scene she fled,
And far from crowds, beneath a foreign sky,
She found that love contentment could supply!

Scrap Book.

"I have no doubt," said Mrs. Meredith, "that I am the person against whom the designs of this man are directed. It seems, indeed, strange that, after the lapse of eighteen years, he should discover me in a retired corner of a distant country, and stranger yet, that he should still be actuated with a desire to disturb my peace.

"You are already acquainted with part of my history before I arrived, as your brother's wife, in this country. You are aware, that my father's name was Harris, that he was a Colonel in the service of the English East India Company, and that having lost my mother in my infancy, I was, on my father being ordered to India, with his regiment, which was in my ninth year, placed under the care of a sister of my mother, then the widow of Sir Robert Radnor. This lady was a notable, pleasant, and rather morally disposed woman, and I believe sincerely attached to me. She had one

Digitized by Google

son, her only child, the inheritor of his father's title and property. This youth was about three years older than myself. He was the idol of his mother, and consequently a wilful and wayward boy. His temper was boisterous and turbulent, and to his mother, notwithstanding all the tenderness she lavished upon him, he was frequently disobedient and sometimes rude. To me, however, he always manifested great attention; and I was scarcely fourteen when he declared himself my lover. I was perhaps too young to be susceptible of tender emotions; but whether or not, neither the person, conduct, manners, nor disposition of my cousin, were calculated to make an impression on my heart. I had, in fact, imbibed an insurmountable aversion towards him. Before his declaration, his complaisance to me, demanded and always obtained mine in return. But after that event, I could barely tolerate him. He ascribed my coldness to youthful shyness, and romantically pretended to love me the more for it.

"Affairs remained in this state for several months, when his mother interfered in his behalf. My father had acquired great wealth in India; and in point of fortune, placing out of view the affection which I believe she really felt for me, I was an eligible match for her son. Her interference, however, produced towards him no favourable change in my sentiments.

Digitized by Google

I now began to experience great diversity of treatment from her. Sometimes I was flattered and caressed, and at other times threatened and abused. The young baronet, in the meantime, never ceased persecuting me with his addresses, so that my situation became very unpleasant, and I took the resolution to write to my father on the subject.

"My aunt, however, had anticipated me in this measure. In less than two months after I had written, I received a letter from my father, in which he stated, that the prospect of a union between me and Sir Robert Radnor, afforded him great satisfaction; and he trusted that my feelings towards Sir Robert, fully responded to the ardent affection the latter professed for me. In which case, it would be the greatest pleasure of his life, to give his parental sanction to our nuptials.

"This letter did not answer the designs of my persecutors, so completely as they wished. It contained a recommendation, but laid on me no injunction, in relation to the proposed match. I, therefore, felt at liberty still to reject the baronet's addresses; and I hoped, that when, from my own letter, my father should become acquainted with the true state of my feelings, he would not urge me into a measure against which I entertained such strong repugnance.

"In the meantime an occurrence took place,

Digitized by Google

which awakened in my bosom new feelings, and gave a new direction to the tenor of my life. My aunt had some slight indisposition, which drove her to Bath. I accompanied her. One day, as we sat in our drawing room, we heard the noise of some tumult on the street. We hastened to a window. We saw a crowd, and soon understood that an officer of the law was dragging a poor man to prison for debt. His wife had overtaken the procession at this spot, and when we first looked out, she was pathetically, but vainly imploring the relentless creditor, who was present, for mercy. The unfeeling man, irritated at having his barbarity thus exposed on the street, rudely and with insulting language, drove the distracted woman from him. The word 'shame! shame!' burst from the crowd. Several persons of the affluent classes, had stopped to look upon the scene and sympathized with the sufferers, so far as to join in the cry of indignation that had been raised. But they did no more! and the procession was again moving forward, when a young man, habited as a Quaker, hastened towards the creditor, who was at that moment pushing the debtor's wife, with some violence, out of his way.

"'What does thee mean,' demanded he, 'by thy violence towards this woman?'

"'It is none of your business," replied the

Digitized by Google

man, surlily, again pushing the woman from before him, and directing the bailiff to move forward with the prisoner.

The young Quaker caught the poor woman's arm in his.

"'Fear not,' said he, 'I will protect thee. Tell me thy grievance!—That man is too angry to be spoken with.'

"'Alas!' she replied, 'they are dragging my husband to prison for debt, and my poor children shall be doomed to starvation.'

"'What is the amount of thy claim against this poor man?' asked the stranger, again addressing the creditor.

"I heard no more. I felt I had been inactive too long. An impulse had suddenly seized me, which was uncontrollable. I was impelled by a fatality which I could not resist, and was, indeed, hardly responsible for what I did. I hurried down stairs, and my aunt had scarcely noticed my departure from the room, before I was in the midst of the crowd, pressing my purse into the hands of the debtor's wife.

"Take this, I beg of you," said I, "and if it be sufficient to rescue your husband from the hands of these cruel men, let him be set at liberty immediately. If not sufficient, I will furnish whatever additional sum shall be necessary."

'"He is no longer a prisoner,' answered the

Digitized by Google

woman refusing to accept the money I offered. The bounty of that blessed young gentleman has released him.—Oh! let me, let me thank him."

"I looked up. I caught he young man's glance. It warmed my heart; it was so expressive of kindness and benevolence.

'"Fair young lady,' said he, 'I have satisfied this harsh creditor, and the prisoner is free. But thee has a good heart which should not be deprived of its gratification. This woman ought to accept of thy benefaction, for I understand that she is very poor, and that her children are in want of proper sustenance.'

'"Oh! do, I beg thee, take it,' said I to the woman, forcing the money into her hand. She received it; and I hurried back, in extreme confusion, to the apartment where I had left my astonished aunt. I had scarcely explained to her the impulse under which I had acted, when my confusion was increased by a message from the young stranger, who called himself, Edward Meredith, requesting permission to wait upon me, which my aunt readily granted. He entered, apologised for the freedom he had taken; but said he, addressing me—

'"Thy goodness of heart, which was so powerful as to overcome thy evident reluctance to appear in a crowd, struck me as something so rare and admirable, in a young lady of thy rank, that I could not resist my desire to ex-

Digitized by Google

press to thee how much I respect thee for it. I arrived in Bath only this morning, and have taken lodgings in the inn opposite to this house. If thy aunt and thee have no objection, permission to visit you sometimes, while I remain in Bath, will afford me much pleasure.'

"My aunt signified her acquiescence.—But I will not detain you with a repetition of the conversation which ensued. It produced an impression on my heart in favour of your brother; for you are aware that this youth was he; the recollection of which to this day makes it glow with precious and dear feelings. He visited us frequently, and soon took occasion to declare that he loved me, and I did not deny—for I could not be disingenuous with one whom I conceived to be all candour and goodness—that his affection was returned.

"This sweet intercourse of united hearts was soon interrupted. My cousin, Sir Robert, joined us at Bath, and with the Argus eye of a jealous lover, discovered what his mother had not even suspected.

'"It cannot be possible,' said she, when her son informed her of his convictions on the subject, 'that a girl so gay and lively as Matilda, should encourage the addresses of a plain and formal Quaker! You must be mistaken, Sir Robert. Your jealousy alarms you needlessly. The thing is quite impossible.'

Digitized by Google

"It was resolved, however, that we should leave Bath immediately; and much to my regret, I was obliged to withdraw from the society of him who had given to my heart a new feeling, and lent my life sensations of endearment and delight it had never before experienced.

"We returned to our former residence in London, where I was subjected to the unremitting and vexatious solicitations of my cousin, to become his wife. His mother was scarcely less urgent than himself, and their united importunities on this hateful subject rendered me truly miserable. In the course of a few weeks, the impatience of the young baronet, irritated, as he was, by the unyielding and unqualified firmness of my refusal, became irrepressible, and his manner of addressing me assumed a boldness it had never exhibited before. He upbraided me with my attachment to your brother, and threatened vengeance upon the latter for what he called his audacity in making pretensions to my favour. My alarm, lest these threats should be performed, added greatly to my unhappiness. I wished exceedingly to apprize Edward of his danger, and to urge him to fly from the country, or at least avoid meeting with the incensed baronet. But with Edward, I had no means of communicating. Since leaving Bath, I had neither seen him, nor heard of

Digitized by Google

him, and delicacy forbade me to attempt inquiring after him.

"About six weeks after our return to London, I was constrained to accompany my aunt to a country-lodge, near Hatfield, belonging to Sir Robert who followed us the next day. Having stopped at an inn on the road for refreshment, our footman, to my great astonishment, took an opportunity of slipping the following note into my hand, whispering, 'Read this in private.'

'"A scheme is laid to entrap or enforce thee to marry thy cousin. If thee wilt be firm, Providence may enable me to rescue thee from thy tormentors. I watch all their movements, but in such attire as prevents them from discovering me. May Heaven protect thee!

'Thy loving friend,

E. MEREDITH.'

"This communication revived my spirits. The second day after we reached the lodge, my aunt put into my hands a letter from my father, in which, after remonstrating with me for rejecting the addressess of Sir Robert, he laid his parental injunctions on me to receive him without delay, as my husband, threatening me with his utmost displeasure in the event of my refusal.

"'Never!' said I; 'never will I receive him as my husband. My father knows not the ex-

Digitized by Google

tent of the sacrifice he demands. But whether or not, even a father has no right to command his child to be wretched.'

"That evening, as I sat alone in my own chamber, absorbed in melancholy reflections on my unhappy situation, the door slowly opened, and the dreaded figure of my cousin presented itself. After some fulsome panegyrics on my my beauty, and vehement declarations of the ardour of his passion, he protested, that since he had obtained my father's approval of our union, he would not leave me, until a day should be fixed for its accomplishment.

"I remained firm. I was indignant at his unmanly intrusion on my privacy, and I declared that no power on earth should ever compel me to be his.

"His countenance became inflamed, his eyes darted looks of terrific rage, and he swore that if, by to-morrow evening at the same hour, I did not yield to his entreaties, he would do a deed of horror, by which my happiness would be for ever sacrificed to the gratification of his passions, and at the recollection of which I should tremble to the latest hour of my existence. He then withdrew, locking the door on the outside, as if resolved to prevent my escape from the catastrophe he had threatened.

"In an agony of grief and terror, I threw myself on my knees and supplicated Heaven for

Digitized by Google

deliverance from the power of my tormentor. My mind being too much agitated to permit sleep and feeling too much alarmed to resign myself to the defenceless condition to which my retiring to bed would reduce me, since the key of my chamber was in possession of the object of my terror, I sat up, and resigned myself to the most gloomy meditations on my prospects. In this state I was startled, at about one o'clock in the morning, with a low voice whispering at my window. I soon recognised it to be that of our footman. He displayed a letter. I opened the window and received it. It was from Edward.

'"I know the extremity to which thou art reduced,' said he, 'and the evils that threaten thee. If thou wouldst escape them, fly immediately. Francis, thy footman is faithful, entrust thyself to him. He will bring thee to where I am waiting for thee, having every thing arranged for thy safe conveyance from the reach of thy persecutors.'

"I blessed Heaven for this interposition. In a few minutes I was ready, and descended the ladder which was affixed to my window. A few minutes more placed me in a carriage beside my Edward. We drove off rapidly, my heart beating with that species of delightful trepidation which a bird may be supposed to feel when it has escaped from the snares of the

Digitized by Google

fowler. In less than a week we were privately married at Bristol, and embarked the next day in a ship bound for Philadelphia. The remainder of my story you know. You were witness to my happiness for the few years that Heaven permitted me to enjoy the best and dearest of husbands, and you are aware of the reverence and love with which I have cherished his memory, as well as the assiduity with which I have endeavoured to perform my duty to the dear pledge which he has left me, my beloved son, watching over whose welfare is the charm that has long formed the chief enjoyment of my life."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

Again I'll try her. She escaped me once:
But there's no sleek-face now to charm young Cupid,
Into rebellion. Plutus is my friend;
And little Cupid may, perhaps, be won,
By gentle dalliance, to draw forth his bow,
And send a conq'ring arrow to her heart.

Scrap Book.

The peaceful and prudent Elias was of opinion that it was preferable to shun danger by flying from it, than run the risk of encountering it by disregarding timely warning. When, therefore, Mrs. Meredith had ended her narrative, it was arranged that, for the present night, strict watch should be kept by her servants, and every suspicious or unknown person prevented from approaching the house; and that to-morrow she should proceed, escorted by a number of friends, to Philadelphia, in the midst of the dense population of which, she would, by the exercise of common caution, be more secure from personal danger than in the comparative solitude where she lived. Elias having given the necessary directions to the servants whom Edward undertook to keep to their duty during the night, returned to his own house, in order to make preparations for to-morrow's journey.

At an early hour in the morning, a stranger approached the guarded premises, who re-

Digitized by Google

quested admission to the presence of their mistress.

"You must first declare your name and intentions," said Edward: "I am mistaken, if I did not hear your voice in a conversation of no very safe import yesterday evening in the woods."

"It may be so," replied the stranger, not in the least daunted. "Nevertheless I am the friend of Mrs. Meredith. Tell her that Francis Holmes wishes to see her. Show her that piece of coin in token of my veracity, and she will not refuse me admittance."

Edward hastened with the message to his mother. She immediately recognised the coin, which was an ancient gold piece that her husband had presented to Francis among other tokens of his regard.

"Francis Holmes," said she, "was once my friend, and I trust he is so still. He is the faithful footman who enabled me to escape from a fearful danger. Let him be admitted."

Edward accordingly introduced Francis.

"Francis," said Mrs. Meredith, "you are welcome. It is long since we have seen each other. I doubt not that the motive of your present visit, is as friendly as was your former conduct."

"Never," returned Francis, "shall I be otherwise than a friend to the daughter of my first

Digitized by Google

A M Cumming

master, whose kindness snatched me from beggary, and gave me education and a livelihood; and the wife of the benevolent man whose bounty saved my parents from ruin, when a harsh landlord had seized their all. Happy indeed am I once more to behold my young mistress; for you will permit me still to call you so—to be the friend of whom I pledged myself to my first benefactor, when on leaving her to go to India, he begged that I should, for his sake and hers, remain as a servant in the family, to whose protection he had committed her. Yes, Mrs. Meredith, I am your friend, and visit you now for a friendly purpose."

"Well, I will believe you, Francis," said Mrs. Meredith, "notwithstanding language well calculated to alarm me, was no later than last evening, heard to pass between you and the former troubler of my peace, Sir Robert Radnor, in whose service, I find you still are."

"No," replied Francis, "I am not, properly speaking, in his service. I am no longer a menial. Your husband's liberality for the share I had in effecting your escape, of which Sir Robert, to this day, knows nothing, enabled me to withdraw from servitude, and assist my father in stocking and cultivating the little farm which the same liberality had shortly before, enabled him to retain. About two years

Digitized by Google

afterwards, my parents died; and having then no person to provide for, I sold my farm and resolved to live at my ease, in a species of frugal independence, which I was soon the better enabled to do by a legacy of a thousand pounds bequeathed to me by your father."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Meredith, "can you tell me any particulars relative to my father's death? It was long after it took place before I heard of it. My husband had recently died, and my whole attention was occupied in studying the welfare of my infant son. Besides, not knowing whether Sir Robert Radnor was married, I was afraid to make my residence known, lest I should be again persecuted by his addresses. I, therefore, made no inquiry, and I obtained no information on which I could rely. I was merely told that he died on his passage home from India, and that, in resentment for my rejection of Sir Robert, he had bequeathed me none of his property."

"Part only of that information is true," replied Francis. "It was on his passage home that he died. But he knew nothing of your marriage at the time of his death; and with the exception of a few legacies, he left you his entire fortune, on condition that you should marry Sir Robert. In the event of your rejecting him, you were to receive only ten thousand pounds, and in the case, Sir Robert

Digitized by Google

was to receive but five thousand. The residue of his property was bequeathed to his brother, Thomas Harris, of Liverpool, since deceased, whose son now enjoys it."

"Thank Heaven! he had not cast me so far from his affections as I was informed," said Mrs. Meredith. "In death, imposed on as he was by my persecutors, he still bore for me a father's affection. By this information, you have removed the load which has, of late years, pressed most heavily on my feelings. But let me ask, why am I again threatened with persecution by Sir Robert Radnor?"

"To explain this is the main object of my present visit. Hear me with patience while I relate to you some of the events of Sir Robert's career after you fled from his power. When your flight became known, Sir Robert doubted not that the young Quaker, with whom you had become acquainted at Bath, had carried you off. I and two or three other servants were immediately summoned; and, with the enraged baronet at our head, we started on fleet horses in pursuit. I was aware of the road you had taken and managed to lead our company into another. Sir Robert was persuaded that you would be heard of at Bath, and we hastened thither. But gaining no intelligence there, we were about setting off for Bristol, when I proposed that we should disperse in different direc-

Digitized by Google

tions, as the most probable means of succeeding in our views. Sir Robert approved of the plan, and offered a large reward to him who should first bring satisfactory information respecting you to Bath, where, as a central point, he proposed to remain, until such information should reach him. I volunteered to take the way to Bristol; and was despatched thither, and was much pleased to learn, that a ship had thence sailed for America the day before my arrival. I doubted not that you were in her, and were consequently safe from our pursuit. I returned to Bath. Sir Robert could not believe that you had time to embark in the Bristol vessel. I then suggested the probability of your concealment in London, with the view of sailing thence, as we had not been able to trace you in the west of England. We, in consequence, returned to the metropolis, and after various ineffectual inquiries, Sir Robert began to entertain the idea of following you to America. It was a chimerical scheme from which his mother and friends at that time with difficulty dissuaded him. He still, however, entertained the idea, if it were only, as he said, to chastise the presumptuous Quaker who had stolen you from him. In fact, all British eyes were shortly afterwards turned to the western continent on which an important war was raging, and the gallant Wolfe and his compeers in arms, were reaping immortal laurels.

Digitized by Google

"The imagination of Sir Robert, in every thing enthusiastic, now took a military turn. He purchased a captain's commission, and in April, 1758, embarked for New York. Shortly after his arrival there, he, at a ball given by the citizens to the military officers, met with a beautiful girl of whom he became violently enamoured, and after a few weeks' courtship, led her to the altar. In a few weeks more, he was obliged to join his regiment at Albany. His wife accompanied him, and they remained there during the winter. In the spring, he was ordered to join the division of the army which marched, under Sir William Johnson, against the French forts on the lakes. The delicate state of his wife's health prevented her from attending him on this active service, and she returned to New-York, to reside with her father, who was a respectable merchant in that city.

"The regiment to which Sir Robert belonged, being detached to the assistance of General Wolfe in his attack upon Quebec, arrived in time to participate in the glory of the battle of Abraham, in which the baronet was dangerously wounded. During his confinement, which was protracted many weeks, he received information from New York, that his wife had died in child-bed, and that the child, a daughter, had survived its mother but a few hours. His

Digitized by Google

physicians now declared that the milder air of his native country was necessary to accelerate his recovery, and restore him to his former health. He accordingly embarked for England, where he soon recovered; and, becoming smitten with the graces of a daughter of a country gentleman, he married her. This lady died about eighteen months ago, without leaving him any offspring.

"Very recently his attention became again directed towards you. Your uncle Harris of Liverpool, to whom your father bequeathed his fortune, had died, leaving to inherit his vast wealth, only one son, a wild youth who is likely soon to squander it away by extravagance. Sir Robert, by some means, became informed of the place of your residence, and of your being a widow. He conceived it possible, therefore, to induce you to fulfil the letter of your father's will by marrying him, and thereby become entitled to the fortune now in possession of a spendthrift. It is for this purpose he is at present in this neighbourhood. Obvious reasons render him unwilling to appear before you personally, until he shall ascertain the state of your feelings towards him, as well as your views in relation to the proposal he wishes to make. To save you both the pain of an interview, should your feelings be opposed to one, I undertook the

Digitized by Google

task I have performed, of laying the subject before you. I now leave the result to the decision of your own judgment and feelings."

"It is, indeed, a strange account of things that you have given me," said Mrs. Meredith. "But let me ask, if Sir Robert be desirous of making friendly overtures to me, what he could mean by the threats he used yesterday, to have me carried by force on ship-board?"

"Mrs. Meredith," replied Francis, "I would not be the friend of your welfare, which I profess to be, if I were to deceive you in any respect. I shall, therefore, acknowledge that Sir Robert, having but little expectation that persuasion will induce you to accede to his wishes, builds his hopes of success chiefly on intimidation."

"Francis," said Mrs. Meredith, "your candour and honesty convince me that you are still my friend. I sincerely thank you for the intelligence you have given me. My resolution respecting Sir Robert requires no deliberation. It is at once taken. The wealth of worlds would not induce me to marry such a man. Tell him so, I request you; and tell him also to abandon his views of violence against me, otherwise I shall appeal to the authorities of the land for protection, and have him dealt with, as a conspirator against my safety and happiness."

Digitized by Google

"Be assured, madam," replied Francis, "I shall convey to him your message, and enforce his abandonment of this wild scheme with all my influence. Believe me, when I say, that my only reason for adhering to his society, at present, is to frustrate as far as I can, any outrage he may attempt against you."

Francis then withdrew, resolved to continue his friendly exertions in behalf of so deserving a lady. The ill success of his negotiation was precisely what he expected, and, perhaps, what he approved. His chief object was gained by the information he had given Mrs. Meredith of her danger, and he was gratified with the belief, that he had inspired her with full confidence in his friendship. To communicate the result to the testy and wayward baronet at the White Buck, was now his task, and it was far from being an agreeable one. A paroxysm of rage and a storm of abuse, he knew would be the consequence. But he was prepared not only to witness, but, if necessary, to endure it, in the performance of his duty.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

Oh, liberty! inspiring sound! how dear
To noble bosoms is thy sweet possession!
Mean is the soul would barter thee for gold,
Or, fawn on kings to live a gilded slave.
Oh! sacred Heaven! let Freedom be my lot,
Though in a cottage, far removed from grandeur,
And I'll not envy any titled slave
Whose life luxuriates in a monarch's smiles.

Sedley.

The diligent and anxious Elias had made every necessary preparation for the removal of Mrs. Meredith to Philadelphia, and he arrived at her house with his escort shortly after Francis had left it. Mrs. Meredith's alarm, however, had now greatly subsided. She believed that she had in Francis, an active and vigilant friend, who would conteract the evil designs of the baronet, or at least afford her timely notice for providing against them. But the wary Elias was not so easily satisfied on this point.

"Thy persecutor is rich," said he, "and thy friend may become frail, if strongly tempted; or he may, if he takes thy part too openly, become the object of thy tormentor's dislike, peradventure his victim; for who can set bounds to the atrocities of the wicked? The city is the safer place for thee in the present emergency; and thy son's residence there, a matter which thee has for sometime contemplated, will contribute to his improvement,

Digitized by Google

and being under thy own eye, there will be little danger of his acquiring vicious or improper habits. My cousin, Isaac Ellworth and his wife, will gladly receive thee, having often wished thee to sojourn, for a season, with them, that thee might enjoy the society of the city."

Mrs. Meredith yielded to these reasons, and that evening the young and delighted Edward, for the first time in his life, found himself in the beautful and flourishing metropolis of his native country. Edward was now upon the borders of seventeen, with a heart joyous, generous, open, and susceptible to every impression of novelty, and every impulse of sympathy and delight. He soon formed a large circle of acquaintances among the respectable young men of the city, with whom his manners became at once assimilated. His mother was delighted with the daily improvement he exhibited in manly appearance, in polish of manners, expansion of intellect, and knowledge of the ways of man. It is true, that she felt occasional apprehensions, lest amidst the temptations that surrounded him, he might deviate from the path of rigid morality, and suffer his principles to be corrupted by the fascinations of pleasure. But, as yet she had nothing of which to complain; and she was too much delighted at witnessing his felicity to interrupt it by any manifestation of doubts respecting the

Digitized by Google

stability of his principles and the continued propriety of his conduct.

She had been five or six weeks in the city, before she heard any thing concerning the movements of Sir Robert. She then received a letter from Francis, from which the following passage is extracted.

"The rage of Sir Robert, when I reported your message to him, was excessive; and it became still more so, when he learned that you had withdrawn from the neighbourhood. He vented better reproaches against me, ascribing your flight to my unseasonable exposure of his designs. He at length became convinced that you had been alarmed before my interview with you, and acquitted me of any intention to betray him. He followed you to Philadelphia, and remained there, *incognito*, about a week. But perceiving that you were too well protected by your friends, to afford him an opportunity of effecting any project of abduction against you, he began to listen to the voice of reason, and to perceive the folly of his conduct. I had left him, my own affairs requiring my presence in New York. He followed me to that city, as soon as he became convinced of the impracticability of forcing you into a marriage. He there spent some days, making inquiries after the relations of his American wife. He was informed that her father had been dead

Digitized by Google

many years, and that her only sister had long ago removed, with her husband, to some other place of residence. Where this was he had now no time, and perhaps little inclination to trace, for having obtained the command of a troop of calvary, he was ordered by Sir Guy Carleton to assume his military duty at Boston, the inhabitants of which city have become extremely violent in their manifestations of hostility to the measures of the British government.

"I intend to remain in New-York for some time, having formed a connexion which, as I begin to feel wearied of a wandering life, may terminate in domesticating me here. If not, I shall take a trip to Boston, to enjoy the society of some old acquaintances who are now in the army there."

This letter having quieted Mrs. Meredith's fears of suffering any immediate outrage from the violence of Sir Robert Radnor, she returned to her residence on the Brandywine. Her son accompanied her, and, although he was far from being wearied of the society and amusements of Philadelphia, he felt a real satisfaction, for he was somewhat of a sentimentalist, at being again amidst his native woods.

At this period, the spirit of political discussion animated all classes of people in America. That opposition to the British authority which, shortly afterwards, produced the bold measure of

Digitized by Google

Ps. D.S.I. N.A.S. Jan'y 184

the declaration of the independence of this great country, was every day waxing stronger. Patriotism had taken firm root in the breasts of the eminent and masterly spirits of the age, as well as of the great mass of the people. The feeling that the rights of the colonies were infringed, and the opinion that such infringement ought to be opposed, prevailed from one extremity of the continent to the other, not universally, it is true, for there were many who felt and thought differently, but with such predominating influence as to give impulse and direction to all public measures. It happened, fortunately for the cause of America, that a great proportion of those who disapproved of the principles and conduct of her friends, and considered the patriotism of the day sedition, were men of peaceful habits, inactive and unwarlike. This was particularly the case in Pennsylvania, where the sect of the Quakers, quiescent in feeling, and religiously averse to war, possessed great influence, not only from their numbers, but from their wealth, and the peculiar correctness of their moral deportment. Had these men been as active and warlike as the Eastern and Southern royalists, and had they thrown the weight of their great resources into the scale of the latter, the balance might have turned against the country, and rendered the efforts of her patriots, at that time at least,

Ps. New Jersey Hist. Soc'y 1842

Digitized by Google

to rescue her from a foreign yoke, abortive. But the same principles which induced the Quakers to acquiesce in the arbitrary measures of the British government, namely, a submissive spirit and aversion to bloodshed, prevented them from presenting any essential resistance to the efforts of those who boldly took up arms in their country's cause. Hence thousands of Americans who were opposed in principle to the struggle for independence, were altogether neutral in practice. They surveyed the scenes of devastation and carnage that surrounded them with horror; admiring, no doubt, the courage, and pitying the sufferings of the brave men who faced and defied the terrors of the times, but, at the same time, lamenting and condemning what they esteemed their rashness and delusion.

Among this class of sentimental opponents to the military patriotism of the times, we are reluctantly obliged to rank our good friend, Elias Meredith. He often and deeply deplored the infatuation of that hot-headed generation of men, as he called them, who preferred plunging into all the evils of a bloody war, to the paying of a small sum of money, merely because it was demanded from them as a tax, to the levying of which the customary formality of voting for it by their own representatives was not attached.

Digitized by Google

"Because a small wrong is done thee," he would say to his nephew, who, during his visit to Philadelphia, had become strongly tainted with whiggism, "is it any reason why thee should do thyself a great wrong? If a stronger man than myself attempts to force six-pence from me, would I not be foolish, if I were to grapple and fight with him, at the risk of my life, in order to save it? No; rather than engage in mortal combat with any one, I would choose to give up all that I possess; for of what value would riches be to me, if I were slain? Or should I slay my antagonist in a quarrel which I might avoid, what comfort could wealth ever afterwards afford me? Solomon saith truly, 'Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife?' "

Such reasoning made but little impression on the judgment, and still less on the feelings of Edward. The degradation of tamely submitting to injustice, he considered intolerable to any generous spirit. "And what," he would ask, "could be more pusillanimous or contemptible than for a whole people to submit quietly to be despoiled of the fruits of their industry, at the will and pleasure of dictatorial and hectoring foreigners? It cannot be either true religion or sound morality which would condemn resistance to such flagrant injustice."

Digitized by Google

This difference of political sentiment, however, although freely avowed on the part of Edward, occasioned no personal variance between him and his uncle. Elias disliked no man merely on account of opinions. The most honest mind, he believed, may be mistaken in judgment; and, if power ever exercises any species of oppression more unjust and barbarous than another, he considered it to be that which attempts to enforce opinion and destroy the freedom of conscience.

The country was now fast assuming an armed attitude, and preparing with remarkable energy and resolution, for the bloody crisis which was fast approaching. Blood had, indeed, been already shed, for the battle of Lexington was fought, and a military enthusiasm had seized upon the minds of all the generous patriots in the land. Edward had not escaped the ardour; but a due deference to the feelings not only of his uncle, but his mother, (for against her views and wishes, he had also to contend,) prevented him, for some time, from arraying himself openly as a soldier beneath the standard of that cause to which he had given his affections.

The whiggism of Edward had also to contend with the reasonings and remonstrances of another individual, for the extent of whose knowledge and the soundness of whose judg-

Digitized by Google

ment, he had long cherished an habitual respect, this was his excellent preceptor, Adam Balantyne. The peaceful habits of this gentleman, his long cherished veneration for the name of Britain, and his thorough conviction, that the British constitution was the best model of government that could be framed by man, rendered him extremely hostile to the insurrectionary doctrines and movements now so prevalent in America. With his characteristic warmth, he did not hesitate to proclaim his sentiments, and with his national propensity to abstract disquisition, he never declined to enter into the arguments which the friends of the mother country, at that busy period of political animadversion and theorizing, adduced in behalf of her cause.

As these arguments have been long since exploded, it would be useless to protract this history by introducing them here. I shall therefore take the liberty of concluding this chapter, by informing the reader, as an inducement for him to proceed in the work, that he will find, by the example which the story of Balantyne will furnish, that the influence of theoretical convictions or abstract opinions on the mind, is but feeble when it happens to come into collision with awakened and strongly excited passions.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

Yes, 'tis my country's call—her foes are come—
Dissuade me not; her voice I must obey—
This is the hour for patriots to assume
The garb of war, and form the dread array,
And in the battle earn the glorious plume
Of victory; and amidst the deadly fray,
Inscribe, with bloody steel, th' invader's doom,
And sink oppression deep into oblivion's tomb.

Scrap Book.

It will not be supposed that, when the dark hour of his country's trials approached, a young man of the feelings and principles of Edward Meredith, would remain long content with favouring her only with his good wishes. The first occasion on which he made any active movement in her behalf, was when the ship Polly arrived in the Delaware, with a cargo of the well-known obnoxiously taxed tea. He happened to be on a visit to Philadelphia when this event was announced, and a town meeting, at which upwards of eight thousand people were assembled, was held in the State-house yard, to deliberate on the measures that should be adopted to prevent the tea from being landed. At this meeting a deputation was appointed to wait on the commander of the ship, and demand his departure from the country with his unwelcome cargo on pain of witnessing a repetition of the tea transaction at Boston.

Digitized by Google

In order to enforce this demand, a number of the young men of the city volunteered to accompany the deputation to the vessel. Meredith joined them. Under the name of "Liberty Boys," they proceeded to the vessel, and by their resolute bearing, soon convinced her commander, that his wisest course was to comply with the public wish, and carry his ungracious cargo back to the Thames.

While on board of this ship, Meredith fell into conversation with a young man of good address and pleasing appearance, who had come in her, as a passenger from England. To his great surprise and satisfaction, he soon discovered this person to be his relative, Harris, the inheritor of his grandfather's property, whom Francis had described, as a youth of so much extravagance and dissipation.

Although from previous information, Meredith had no reason to be prepossessed in favour of this young man, yet the natural generosity of his disposition, and a feeling of real satisfaction at meeting, for the first time, with a relative of his mother, now afar from his own home, induced him to give him a sincere and hearty welcome, and to invite him to the hospitality of his mother's board. The invitation was accepted; and, Meredith, instead of returning to the city with the "Liberty Boys," proceeded with his cousin to his own residence.

Digitized by Google

Charles Harris was received by Mrs. Meredith with much kindness. He, indeed, exhibited a frankness of manner and a candour of speech, with which she could not fail to be pleased.

"I am aware," said he, as soon as the conversation permitted him to touch upon family matters, "that the large fortune which I derived from my uncle, your father, you had every natural reason to expect should have devolved upon you. But as I could have had no agency in the framing of your father's will, being but a child at the time of his death, you must hold me guiltless of having made any unfair interference with your claims. I also firmly believe, that my father was equally guiltless with myself; and for accepting the property legally bequeathed to him, you can hardly consider him censurable."

"I never blamed either you or your father in that affair," observed Mrs. Meredith. "I knew too well on whom the burden of accusation should be laid, to cast it on the innocent. But, thank Heaven, the plotters against me only partially succeeded. They deprived me of my father's property, but even his will proves that they could not deprive me of his affections; and in the attainment of the great end they had in view, which was to induce me, by the allurements of wealth, to marry a

Digitized by Google

man I detested, they were disappointed. By their representations, they had caused my father to set his heart upon my becoming the wife of Sir Robert Radnor, to effect which his will was evidently framed. But even here my father showed a parental tenderness which has afforded me much consolation; for anticipating the possibility of my persisting in despite of every inducement to refuse Sir Robert, he, in that event, secured me a competence. It is true, I have never received this legacy, nor even applied for it. But it has yielded me a satisfaction superior to wealth in the conviction I have drawn from it, that, in his last moments, my father's affections, notwithstanding all the efforts of my enemies, were not alienated from me."

"It is true," replied Harris, "that your father bequeathed you ten thousand pounds, and that mine should have paid it to you. But, as you observe, you never made application for it, and it remains a debt unpaid. It should be my duty now to discharge it, and it would be my pleasure, were it in my power. But I must confess that my extravagances have ruined me; and at the age of twenty-four, I, who inherited a splendid fortune, have been obliged to fly from my native country, to avoid the pursuit of my creditors and the terrors of a jail."

"Let not my claim upon you," said Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Meredith, "give you any uneasiness. Providence has blessed me with abundance; and in your misfortunes, I should, indeed, be barbarous, if I were to press upon you for that of which I have no need. Nay; if your ill fortune approaches to any thing like poverty, speak freely: I shall, in that case, hold it my duty to lend you aid."

"Your kindness deserves my best thanks," returned Harris, "and will soften the regret, with which, in my wanderings in a foreign land, I shall reflect on the short-lived splendour I enjoyed in my native country. But I have no immediate occasion for pecuniary aid. I have saved from the wreck of my fortune, a sufficiency for all the comforts of life, and in its extravagances I have resolved no longer to indulge."

"Your loss of fortune may then be advantageous to you," said Mrs. Meredith, "by teaching you how to moderate your desires and conform to the duties of useful and orderly life. But I wish not to preach to you. I trust that your own good sense, after the experience you have had, will render admonitory lessons from others unnecessary. Yet let me observe, as respects myself, that there is one consequence flowing from your loss of fortune which is so valuable to me, that I, indeed, consider it cheaply purchased by the loss of my

Digitized by Google

legacy. I mean the removal of those mercenary inducements which lately prompted Sir Robert Radnor to renew his efforts to force me into matrimony. When he learns that your fortune is lost, he will no longer wish for my hand to entitle him to wrest it from you."

"Indeed!" observed Harris, unconsciously betraying some emotion, "I knew not that Sir Robert had thought of troubling you on that ground. But if an increase of fortune was his object, that inducement no longer exists. My poverty, therefore, may contribute to your peace, a consideration which will form one of the chief consolations that shall enable me to bear it."

The plausibility of Harris's sentiments, his seeming penitence for his former dissolute conduct, and the apparent resignation with which he bore his loss of property, added to his near relationship to her father, awakened the sympathies of Mrs. Meredith for him, and she so warmly pressed him to make his residence in her house, that he consented, for the present, to do so.

The benevolent Elias also manifested much friendship for Harris, whom he looked upon as a young man, who being disgusted with the follies, and wounded by the artifices and malevolence of the world, had fled into the bosom of their secluded society, in order to enjoy an opportunity for re-

Digitized by Google

flection and amendment. As for Edward, his feelings towards his new-found relative were of the most cordial description. He looked upon him with respect as well as affection, not only because he was unfortunate, but because he was a few years older, and had seen much more of the world, than himself. He listened with delight to the accounts which Harris frequently gave him, of the polish and splendour of English society and manners in the higher ranks. The wealth, grandeur, magnificence, and power of that noble island, the native land of his mother, as well as the soil from which his paternal ancestors had sprung, forcibly seized upon his imagination, and warmed his heart with a glow of pride, as often as he would listen to Harris descanting on these themes. But such pride and its attendant partiality would immediately vanish, when he reflected—but reflected with a sigh—that, at that moment, that country, otherwise so glorious, had become the oppressor of his own—nay, had actually unsheathed the sword; and assumed the attitude of a tyrant desirous to establish unjust pretensions and arbitrary rule at the expense of an incalculable amount of human suffering, carnage, and desolation.

But on this subject, the sentiments of Meredith and Harris were at variance. Harris was a staunch adherent to the interests of Britain, while Meredith zealously advocated the Ame-

Digitized by Google

rican cause. The cousins did not, however, in their discussions on the subject, indulge in any acrimonious feelings, for each had liberality enough to respect the partiality of the other for the land of his birth. But Meredith was frequently subjected to much pain in being obliged to withdraw from the debate in deference to his mother and his uncle, who both favoured the side that Harris had espoused. Mr. Balantyne also, as has been already stated, was strongly attached to the same side, and his intimacy, for reasons which will afterwards appear, Harris began soon assiduously to cultivate. The esteem and confidence of one so little experienced in the arts of the designing portion of mankind, as the secluded and warm-hearted preceptor of Dilworth, were easily gained by the insinuating Harris. This young adventurer, therefore, became, in a short time, a frequent and welcome visiter at the house of Balantyne.

Meredith's nearest connexions and most venerated friends were thus in political sentiment arrayed against him. Yet he adhered fast to the faith he had espoused, and had it not been for the remonstrances of his mother, his zeal would have driven him at once into the ranks of the brave men who were now in arms for the rights and liberties of his country.

But Meredith was not without friends—numerous friends—whose opinions countenanced

Digitized by Google

and encouraged his patriotism. The vicinity in which he resided abounded with active and ardent whigs, sufficient not merely to outnumber the tories, but to direct and regulate all the public measures of the district. At the present time, when we know the result of the agitations of that momentous period—when we enjoy, in security and prosperity, the invaluable rights then contended for, and, amidst such great and fearful opposition, so heroically and gloriously achieved, it is with difficulty that we can conceive the distresses and the terrors—the agonizing trials of both mind and body—which then afflicted the community. Party-spirit reigned triumphant in all its rancour; and let loose upon society the demons of discord to embitter the feelings of men, and frequently to break asunder those ties of friendship and affinity which form the most precious and endearing solace of existence. Fathers and sons became hostile to each other, and brothers became the most inveterate foes. Hence domestic tranquillity, that greatest good of man on earth, was banished from the abode of thousands of unhappy families; and there were few indeed, in which its existence was not in some degree disturbed, and its continuance rendered precarious.

Such ever has been, and ever will be the woful effects of great national excitements,

Digitized by Google

whether religious or political. On all such occasions, the minds of men will embrace different views, and cherish different opinions. Arguments will take place, and produce zeal and enthusiasm. Irritation will follow, and then will come strife—strife even unto blood and destruction—and amidst the clamours of impatient zeal or enfuriated revenge, the gentle voice of friendship or consanguinity will either not be heard or be disregarded.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

In joyous youth, what soul hath never known
Thought, feeling, taste, harmonious to its own!
Who hath not paused while Beauty's pensive eye
Asked from his heart the homage of a sigh?
Who hath not owned with rapture-smitten frame,
The power of grace, the magic of a name?

Campbell.

But the time, at length, arrived, when the spirit of Meredith could no longer resist the call of his country. The battle of Bunker's Hill, fortunate and glorious for the arms of America, awakened in the minds of her youth a military ardour which drove them in thousands to her standard. This was greatly increased by the appointment of Washington to the command of her armies. Many who were before timid, now became resolute, and felt confidence in the final result of the struggle, since they saw that their undisciplined and ill-appointed levies, could resist the veteran soldiers of Britain, and that they had now obtained a leader in whose consummate skill they could repose the most implicit reliance.

Animated with the martial feelings which had thus become so prevalent among the patriots of the day, Meredith felt desirous of proceeding at once to the head quarters of Washington and offering his services. His mother's en-

Digitized by Google

treaties and his uncle's remonstrances, however, had, as yet, influence sufficient to prevent this. But he could not be altogether an idle spectator of his country's struggle. Bands of tories became active in the neighbourhood of the Brandywine, and the whigs found it necessary to arm in their own defence. This afforded an opportunity for Meredith to become active. He raised a band of partizan volunteers, self-clothed and self-armed in defence of the district. To this, his friends made but little opposition, in the hopes that such indulgence might satisfy his wishes, and prevent him from leaving home to join the regular army.

Meredith and Harris now became avowed enemies. A coolness had for some time existed between them, arising at first from a cause not connected with politics, although their political differences, now that they had sundered, tended no doubt to widen the breach.

Meredith had become attached to a young lady of Philadelphia, the niece and heiress of an elderly, infirm gentleman, named Lewis. He had first met with her at the Yellow-Springs, where she attended her uncle, who was making trial of the waters for his health. It was on an August afternoon. Meredith had some errand in the vicinity of the Springs. He rode slowly on a narrow path, through a thick wood, which led, by a shorter course, than the main

Digitized by Google

road, to the place he wished to visit. He was within a quarter of a mile of the Springs, in a lonely dell, hidden by tall and dark trees, where all was silent and solitary, when he heard a female voice scream for help. It proceeded from the close woods on his left, which he could not penetrate on horseback. He dismounted, and dashing through the brush-wood, in a moment burst into a small glade, when he saw a stout fierce-looking man in the act of robbing an elderly gentlemen, while a young lady, on her knees, was imploring the ruffian for mercy. The approach of Meredith was, however, more effectual than her entreaties, for on the instant of his appearance, the robber fled, having made booty of only a small purse containing a few guineas, which the lady in her fright had presented to him in the hope of preventing further violence.

"Ah! it is the scoundrel Fitzpatrick!" exclaimed Meredith. "He has too long escaped the gallows!" He was about to pursue the ruffian; but the tones of the sweetest voice he had ever heard, arrested his attention. "Oh! help —help to save my uncle, or he will die!" were the words that thrilled to his heart, and stopped his pursuit of Fitzpatrick.

He hastened to the gentleman. He found him lying on the ground with his countenance discoloured, his eyes swollen, and his whole

Digitized by Google

frame making a convulsive effort for the recovery of breath. The lady had unbound his cravat, and from her, Meredith learned that the robber, in making his attack, had seized the old man by the throat and nearly strangled him. Meredith raised the sufferer in his arms, and he soon recovered sufficiently to permit being conveyed to his lodging at the Springs.

This incident produced a commotion in the feelings of Meredith which he never before experienced. It was not the exultation of rescuing a lady and gentleman from robbery, nor the alarm produced by the dangerous condition in which the gentleman was found, that so strangely agitated him. It was a more endearing and sweeter sensation than such circumstances could inspire. It was the delight with which he beheld the bewitching looks of Harriet Lewis, for so was this beautful being named; the rapture with which he listened to her grateful words uttered in tones sweeter than the honey of music to his heart.—Was he in love? He knew not. It might be so. Yet how could it be? He knew too little of this fascinating lady to warrant such a serious feeling as love. But certainly there was something delightfully strange in the effects of her presence upon his sensations. Nay; reflecting upon her, in her absence, produced in his heart emotions of pleasure which it had never before experienced;

Digitized by Google

emotions in which it now became his chief luxury to indulge. If it was not love, what then could it be? It was a feeling of delight in meditating on her—a feeling of rapture in conversing with her—a passion—in fact, he could not long conceal it from himself; it was the divine passion of love that had, with all its intensity, seized upon his young and ardent heart.

I shall not sentimentalize upon the state of Meredith's feelings at this time, however tempting the opportunity may be to the writer of a history like this, which professes to detail the impulses, as well as the actions of the characters that form its subject. My work is limited to certain bounds which must not be exceeded; and as the events to be related are numerous, I must be frugal of the space allotted to impulses and sentiments.

During the ensuing three weeks, at the termination of which, Mr. Lewis recovered sufficiently to be able to return to Philadelphia, Meredith found, or fancied he had found, business sufficient to require his continuance at the Springs. But when the sound of his Harriet's parting words, had died upon his ears, he discovered that the Springs were intolerably dull, and that he had no longer any business to detain him there. He soon, however, made a pretence for visiting the city; and, as Harris proposed

Digitized by Google

to accompany him, for the transaction of some affairs arising from letters he had just received from England, he could not with propriety refuse his society.

They were on horseback, and riding on a tolerably good road, in a gay conversable humour, when the subject of gallantry to the ladies happening to be introduced, Harris abruptly, as if suddenly recollecting some forgotten piece of intelligence, observed, "By the bye, Edward, you had a most enviable adventure lately at the Yellow Springs: and quite a romantic business too, I understand."

"To what do you allude?" asked Edward in some confusion. "Oh! oh!" replied Harris, "if it be a mysterous affair, I beg pardon for adverting to it. Really I heard a month ago of your vanquishing the robber; and have had many surmises and conjectures to account for your being so close-mouthed on the subject."

"How you received your information," said Edward, "I know not. But you have received, at least part of it, incorrectly. I had no combat with a robber, and therefore could not vanquish one."

"Come, come—no evasions!" returned Harris. "If you did not literally subdue the rogue, you put him to flight, which is much the same thing; and you had the chivalric delight of rescuing venerable age and distressed beau-

Digitized by Google

ty out of his hands. Now you see I know something about the matter!"

"Since you know so much, your curiosity, Mr. Harris, ought to be at rest, for you can have lost but little from my silence on the subject."

"True, I know the most of your adventure with the robber. But, of course, from your own information only can I become acquainted with the progress which the fair lady's charms have made on your heart. Pray, now be candid and open-minded for once, and let me know whether she has really smitten you?"

"Sir," replied Edward, impatiently, "since your mirth has driven you into the scoffing vein, I have no objection to be personally your butt. But I would remind you of the impropriety, and caution you against the imprudence of mingling with your jests, any allusion to a young and respectable female."

"Oh! a truce with such gravity! I have no wish to offend. But if my cousin, Edward Meredith, cannot tolerate from me, a little familiar levity, where on all this wide continent of sulky and touchy humours, may I venture to indulge a jest?"

"Among your intrusive countrymen, perhaps, whose overbearing conduct has latterly proved that they have no great consideration

Digitized by Google

for the rights or the feelings of others. It is therefore to be presumed that they can have but little for their own. Their insensibility in these matters, may enable them to bear with patience what they so readily inflict upon others."

"Come, come, my dear fellow, you are too warm. My countrymen have nothing to do with the question. In what manner have I offended you?"

"By speaking flippantly of a young lady I esteem."

"Upon honour, I intended her no disrespect. How could I? I know nothing in reference to her but what is respectable. Besides I have myself some interest in maintaining her credit for respectability, since, according to a discovery I have just made, I believe I have the honour to be her relation."

"Her relation! How! What have you discovered concerning her?"

"Stay—stay! Do'nt be impatient. My discovery is easily told. One of my letters from England received yesterday, informs me that David Lewis, Esqr. now of Philadelphia, formerly a merchant in New York, is full cousin to my mother—and moreover, from my said mother, I have an introductory letter to the said David Lewis, to deliver which in *propria persona* is the motive of my present visit to the

Digitized by Google

city, and consequently the reason why you are now troubled with my obnoxious company."

"I claim no right to—"

"Nay, nay—no explanations. They are not needed.—But permit me to observe, that I am much mistaken, if your venerable acquaintance is not the identical Mr. Lewis whom I am about to visit as my relation, and of whose niece, therefore, far be it from me to speak flippantly."

Meredith's reply was prevented by the sudden appearance of a man wrapped in a large cloak so as to conceal both his person and his face, who hastily placed in his hand a small packet, and without speaking, hurried back into the woods from which he had issued. Meredith opened the packet, and perceiving the signature to a few roughly written lines, he exclaimed,

"It is the outlaw, Fitzpatrick! Let us pursue and seize him. Justice has been too long defrauded of him."

He was starting in pursuit, when Harris caught the rein of his bridle, and checked his movements.

"Meredith," said he, "be not so rash. If you now venture into that wood, I predict that you will soon be a dead man. Fitzpatrick is not there alone, or he would not have ventured to expose himself to our view. Ha! hear ye that!"

Digitized by Google

Loud huzzas, at that instant, rang through the wood from evidently more than a dozen voices, after which the sound of a solitary fife was heard, moving gradually away to the air of "God save the king."

"You are right, Harris," said Meredith; "there is a band of tories there. I perhaps owe my present safety to your royalism. But let me read the outlaw's packet. Ha! in this fold there is money; a twenty dollar bill, continental currency.—But what says the scrawl. "This is rebel money in which you have faith. Give it to your sweetheart, Miss Lewis, for the five guineas of gold I took from her. I do not wish to rob a young lady, especially when she is handsome; but I have use for the gold, and if she can do any good with this rebellious money, she is welcome. I should have had no objection to have strangled the old fellow, because they say he has a spice of whiggery in his heart. Mr. Meredith, you have a good uncle and a good mother; but I would warn you not to tempt your fate, too far, by persisting in open rebellion against the Lord's anointed.

"Your well wisher,

"James Fitzpatrick."

"P. S. Tell Miss Lewis not to consider me a common robber, but to forgive the fright I put her into. I came by the twenty dollars honestly, having compelled one of your militia

Digitized by Google

captains who was in pursuit of me, to stand and deliver it."

"Faith, an odd kind of honesty this. But Fitzpatrick is certainly no common robber."

"In my opinion," said Harris, "he is an honour to your country. He adheres manfully to his allegiance; and opposes in his own singular manner, the torrent of rebellious principles which has overwhelmed the land, and swept away all the ancient barriers of social order and political subordination."

"We only resist oppression!" exclaimed Meredith, "we only contend for our rights. If this be rebellion, nature and reason lend it their sanction, and impose it on freemen as an incumbent duty, in the performance of which none but grovellers and cowards would refuse to embark!"

"My dear Meredith," said Harris, "you are an enthusiast. I wish to Heaven you were so in a good cause. But let us drop politics, if you please. In these times they inflame the blood too much. Is there any other subject in the discussion of which we might engage with less warmth of feeling and more coolness of judgment?"

"I have little inclination for argument on any subject at present," replied Meredith. "We are now approaching the vicinity of the city, and I am desirous of entering it with unruffled feelings."

Digitized by Google

"Then a truce with hard words until some fitter occasion," said Harris; and the appearances of the country through which they passed, becoming, as they approached the city, more and more diversified by cultivation, afforded, during the remainder of their journey, topics for conversation, on which they could freely descant, and differ, and bandy jests, without increasing the acrimony of their already embittered feelings."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

If Hope's creative spirit cannot raise
One trophy sacred to thy future days,
Scorn the dull crowd that haunt the gloomy shrine
Of hopeless love, to murmur and repine!
But, should a sigh of milder mood express
Thy heart-warm wishes true to happiness,
* * * * *
Through thy wild heart some hapless hour may miss
The peaceful tenor of unvaried bliss,
* * * * *
Yet still may Hope her talisman employ
To snatch from Heaven anticipated joy.
Campbell.

Harris's claims to relationship being in fact well founded, were easily admitted by Mr. Lewis. The agreeable exterior and plausible manners of this young man, have already been noticed. Well educated, and accustomed to the most polished society in Great Britain, he had acquired, in addition to his natural gaiety and cheerfulness, an artificial suavity and an accommodating courtesy of behaviour, especially in the presence of ladies, which rendered him a uniform favourite with the sex. Even men whose judgments attached but slight importance to such superficial accomplishments in comparison with the more solid qualities of the mind and heart, found more satisfaction in his society than that of many on whose sincerity and soundness of principles they could more fully rely.

Digitized by Google

It is not to be wondered at, that, with such companionable qualities added to his claim of relationship, this agreeable young man should soon be permitted to enjoy much intimacy and favour with Harriet Lewis. He, indeed, became assiduous in his attentions to her, and exerted all his arts of pleasing to win her favour. She was pleased with his manners and flattered by his attentions, and, therefore, felt pleasure in his society. With the anxious eye of a devoted lover, Meredith beheld the sudden rise of this intimacy between Harriet and Harris; and the feelings of jealousy became added to the former causes of his dislike of the latter; and as he could not be deceitful, and affect cordiality which he did not feel, his manners as well as his feelings became cool towards his cousin.

Harris soon perceived this change in the manners of Meredith, and he had too much discernment not to know the cause. He triumphed in it. It was exactly what he wished for. He had never felt a sincere friendship for Meredith—perhaps never for any one, for his heart was not made for friendship. And for some time past, he had cherished feelings altogether inimical to his cousin. And Meredith well knew that he was estranged; but he did not suppose him hostile. The arts of dissimulation possessed and practised by Harris, would have been sufficient to deceive one much

Digitized by Google

more experienced in the world, than the youthful, candid and unsuspicious Meredith. Even now, when the latter scarcely concealed his aversion, the former affected not to perceive it, but evinced more than usual cordiality towards one on whom he secretly rejoiced to have the power of inflicting pain. With a refined cruelty, and a serpent-like disposition, he attempted to wind himself into a breast where he knew he was unwelcome, that he might add venom to the wounds he had already given. In this, however, he did not succeed. The single-heartedness of Meredith foiled the arts of his enemy; for no flattery could extort from him a feigned regard or induce him to place confidence where he felt dislike.

The hypocrisy of Harris, however, answered one purpose on which he set considerable value. It deprived Meredith of any pretence for coming to an avowed rupture, an event for which his open temper exceedingly longed. Preserving, by this means, access to the object who was writhing under the influence of his torturing subtleties, the tormentor could enjoy the malignant satisfaction of witnessing the effects of his artful inflictions, which, with the capricious power of mysterious agency, he could modify, diminish, or increase according to his pleasure or the policy of the occasion.

The true causes of Harris's hostility towards

Digitized by Google

Meredith had a foundation much deeper than their political variance, and older than his introduction to Harriet Lewis. The dissimilarity of their dispositions would have prevented them from ever becoming very confidential friends, but, without the aid of some more serious cause for dissatisfaction, might not have interrupted the harmony of good companionship, and social courtesy, which for some time existed between them.

But that cause must now be unfolded. Ah! when I think of it, and its terrible consequences, how does my indignation kindle against the memory of the worker of that deed of iniquity! It is true, he was subjected to the fierceness of a father's vengeance, and was made to shrink with terror, and tremble through all his frame, before the awful denunications of a mysterious agent of Eternal Justice. But could the infliction of vengeance undo the crime he had committed, or restore to the victims of his guilt that happiness of which he had despoiled them. Ah! no—never—never in this world, were they again to know happiness, which had fled from its mansion in their bosoms, like the dove from the ark, to return no more!

At the time Harris arrived in America, Mary Balantyne was approaching her sixteenth year, and if ever there was a fascinating being at that age, she was one. Archness, liveliness,

Digitized by Google

innocence, happiness, beamed from her countenance, which was illuminated with gay looks and playful smiles. She had, from her childhood, been a favourite with Edward Meredith. He was about four years her senior. His attendance at her father's seminary afforded him daily opportunities of observing her dawning beauties, and, at the same time, of becoming acquainted with the excellent qualities of her mind, to the cultivation of which her father had been anxiously attentive. After what has been stated in relation to her father's solicitude for her welfare, and the devotion with which he applied himself to the implanting in her mind correct and virtuous principles, it needs scarcely be added that an abhorrence of vice and an attachment to virtue, had become so habitual to her as almost to form an identity with her nature. She could not think but in accordance with integrity and truth, nor could she cherish a desire that was not virtuous.

Often and often as Meredith beheld her budding graces opening into womanhood, and breathing around her the vernal sweets of youth, beauty, and purity, would feelings warmer than the fraternal ones he had been long accustomed to cherish towards her, intrude into his bosom; but he was obliged to check such dangerous emotions. He dared not think of a closer connexion with her than

Digitized by Google

that of an endearing and disinterested friendship. For his mother, whose sway over his mind was then supreme, amiable and intelligent as she was, had aristocratical feelings on the subject of matrimony, and had formed expectations of seeing her son united to one of the highest females, for rank and fortune, in the land. She had early observed Edward's partiality for the lovely flower that was budding in the bowers of Dilworth; and fair and sweet as she confessed that flower to be, she deemed it too humble and lowly to match with the splendid fortunes which she conceived to be in store for him. She, therefore, repeatedly exhorted him to guard against forming any tender connexion with Miss Balantyne. She even laid her injunctions on him to that effect, and Edward obeyed them. He had long delighted to gaze on the beauties of Miss Balantyne; but these beauties had been hitherto, perhaps, too infantile, to inspire him with a serious and lasting passion. This, as we have seen, it was reserved for the matured charms of Harriet Lewis, to inspire. But the welfare of Mary Balantyne was, notwithstanding, dear to his heart. A generous concern also for that of her father operated on his feelings; for from him he had derived much instruction for which he was grateful. Yet, perhaps, his being the father of the interesting Mary, formed,

Digitized by Google

in reality, the chief claim which Balantyne had upon Edward's regard. Be this as it might, he was, next to his uncle, Elias, the man, in all the world, for whom he entertained the highest veneration.

These were the feelings cherished by Meredith towards Balantyne and his daughter, when Harris became acquainted with them, and owing to congeniality of political opinions, gained the confidence of the loyal North Briton, who looked upon the young Englishman as his countryman. Harris, therefore, soon became a favourite guest at Dilworth, and the attractions of Miss Balantyne made him a frequent one.

The libertine principles of Harris were not unknown to Meredith, who had been often the confidential auditor of his numerous and expensive gallantries in the British metropolis. It was with much uneasiness, therefore, that he observed a man of this description insinuating himself into the affection of the innocent and artless Mary. Harris, not aware of the deep interest which Edward took in the welfare of this young woman, one evening, as they rambled along the banks of the Brandywine, confessed, in his loose, affable, and confidential way, that he was greatly enamoured of Miss Balantyne, that he had declared to her his passion, and had reason to believe that it was fully returned.

Digitized by Google

"Then you are resolved on matrimony, I suppose?" said Edward, jocularly.

"Matrimony!. no, faith," returned Harris, "I am not such a fool as that amounts to. In the bowers of love, it is for a mistress, not a wife that I have always sought; and it is not the smiles of a pretty girl, however fascinating, in the woods of America, that shall make me change my habits."

Meredith was thrown into seriousness by this reply. He remained silent for some moments. He then said with firmness:

"Mr. Harris, you have made an insinuation to which I cannot listen with complaisance nor reply with levity. The daughters of America shall never, in general terms, be spoken of lightly in my hearing, without meeting with a defender. With respect to the one whose affections you say you have courted for no honourable purpose—mark me, sir, in her welfare I am particularly interested. I shall henceforth watch your intercourse with her; and should I discover in your conduct any tendency of a dishonourable nature, from that moment I shall cast you from my friendship, and take upon myself to avenge her cause."

"Hey day! master champion!" retorted Harris, with affected indifference, but evidently much surprised and provoked. "You would fight for the reputation of a favourite fair one,

Digitized by Google

however frail, would you? But, master Edward, whenever I am so fortunate as to win the love of a pretty girl, hang me, if I shall ask your permission to enjoy the blessing!"

"Hear me!" said Meredith; "I will cut this altercation short, by declaring solemnly, that if you attempt, in any manner, by either word or deed, to injure the spotless fame of Mary Balantyne, I shall hunt you over the face of the earth, until I inflict upon you the vengeance that justice shall require!"

"And does Edward Meredith suppose that Charles Harris shall not be easily found, when he is wanted for the purpose of combat? But in whose quarrel does the mettlesome Edward wish now to embark? Whom have I slandered? By heavens, not Miss Balantyne, whom I love too tenderly to injure. But master Edward, your vehemence awakes a strong suspicion that you are somewhat of a rival to me in the affections of this girl. If so, speak out, that we may understand each other, and we shall soon find means of settling our controversy."

"I am not the lover of Miss Balantyne in the sense you suppose," returned Meredith. "But I am her sincere and warm friend, and, as such shall ever be ready to defend her reputation against a calumniator, or revenge it, if need be, upon a seducer. You have heard

Digitized by Google

my determition. Reflect upon it, and act accordingly. Farewell! I shall waste no more words at present."

So saying, Meredith turned abruptly into a different path, on which he observed some people advancing, and left the astonished and irritated Harris cursing equally his own imprudent communication, and his cousin's impetuosity.

From this time Meredith and Harris placed no confidence in each other. The latter made some pretence to Mrs. Meredith for withdrawing his residence from her house, and took lodgings in the village of Dilworth. The meeting of Meredith with Miss Lewis, and the occurrences related in the last chapter took place, shortly after this estrangement, and will account for the high and fretful tone of their conversation on their way to Philadelphia.

The assiduity of Harris's attentions to Miss Lewis, was at first greatly induced by his desire of inflicting pain on Meredith; and his success in this matter afforded him, as we have seen, no small triumph. The gay and light-hearted beauty for whom Meredith sighed, also observed his uneasiness, for what woman was ever blind to the workings of jealousy in the mind of her lover? She internally exulted in this proof of the power of her charms over a young man whom she truly loved. She, therefore,

Digitized by Google

for some time, encouraged the attentions of Harris more than she otherwise would have done ; for, although possessed of a truly good heart, which rendered her averse to give pain to any one, yet she had a sufficient sprinkling of that vanity, generally incident to young and flattered beauties, which inspires them with coquetry, and causes them to derive pleasure from the anxieties and jealousies of their most favoured lovers.

Miss Lewis, however, was not disposed to push her coquetry, in this instance, to excess. Her heart really preferred Meredith to any other suitor, and she did not wish to sport with his feelings so far as either to alienate them from herself, or impel him to a serious and hazardous hostility with Harris. When Edward, therefore, driven almost to desperation by her indulgence of the familiarities of his cousin, resolved, even at the risk of incurring her displeasure, to declare to her his feelings on the subject, and require from her an explanation of her conduct, that he might know whether or not, he yet possessed any place in her regards, she afforded him entire satisfaction on the subject.

"I think," said she, "that the relationship existing between Harris and me, fully sanctions the intimacy of which you complain. At the same time, I confess, that I have intention-

Digitized by Google

ally encouraged his attentions for the purpose of trying the sincerity of your attachment, and also, because I was willing to punish you for being so easily made jealous."

"Oh! Harriet, how could you take pleasure in giving me pain!"

"Mr. Meredith," said she, "if you choose to torment yourself, when I think proper to enjoy the society of my friends, it is your own fault. I really cannot consent to abandon the enjoyments of social life, in order to keep you in good temper."

"You mistake me, Miss Lewis; I do not wish such a sacrifice. But you, indeed, of late seemed to prefer the society of Harris to mine."

"*Seemed*—that word is truly spoken," said she. "It was but a *seeming* preference. Besides you are not my cousin."

"But cousins," he observed, "may be lovers, and are often dangerous playmates."

"Edward!" she replied, "you are really provokingly suspicious. Have I not already made avowals sufficient to convince you of my preference. If you are not satisfied, I assure you I will not fall on my knees and implore you to believe me. I have not affected to doubt the sincerity of your professions, and I consider it a very bad compliment to my veracity that you should doubt mine."

Digitized by Google

"Do not be offended, Miss Lewis," said he. "It is the very ardor of my affections which renders me anxious to have the assurance of yours made doubly sure. But I am now satisfied. I will no longer doubt that I am, in truth, *the preferred of your heart.*"

"Then, since you are become reasonable again, there is my hand," she said, smiling. "I give it in token of a sincere heart; and I hope that, for the future, you will not permit my civilities to my friends, to arouse your jealousy."

Meredith caught the beautiful hand thus offered to him, imprinted on it a burning kiss, which sent blushes to the lovely countenance of its owner, and caused her, in some confusion, to snatch it from his grasp.

"Come, come, Edward," said she, "you are too violent. Let us hasten to the company of our friends, and appear as if we cared nothing for each other."

"You are a most teazing, most bewitching, and endearing, lovely girl. I am, in every thing, your slave, and must obey you," replied Edward, now in the height of good humour and happiness; and he accompanied her to a brilliant evening party to which they had been engaged. Harris was present. Miss Lewis altered not her manner towards him. She was as cordial and familiar with him as usual. He

Digitized by Google

often cast upon Edward a look of malicious triumph. But Edward was now proof against its intended effects; and the officious tormentor was astonished and mortified to observe, that instead of the scowl of vexation and anger, which his exulting glances were accustomed to extort from the writhing object of his malice, they were now only answered with haughty contempt or provoking indifference. On this evening, therefore, the triumph was on the part of Edward; and Harris, with all his dexterity at dissimulation, could not avoid betraying symptoms of discomfiture and chagrin which did not escape the observation of Miss Lewis; and it afforded her no small satisfaction, especially as she saw that it was also perceived by Edward.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

Accursed is the man who lays a snare for the innocence of a maiden; who deceives the confiding heart of a young beauty. Neither a robber on the highway, nor an assassin who destroys life in the dark for a hire, nor a worker in conjurations who, for vengeful purposes, seeks familiarity with malignant spirits, is more wicked and detestable. Execrated by angels and men, he is a fit companion for fiends only, that he may be the object of their mockery, and subjected to endure all the pangs that are accumulated in the infernal store-house of torments.

Talmud.

The next day Edward returned home, but Harris remained in Philadelphia. They had now in reality become too much estranged to be either safe or pleasant companions; and from this time, all intercourse of a friendly nature ceased between them. Harris continued to reside in the city; and began to entertain serious views in regard to Miss Lewis. He soon discovered that her heart was, in reality, Edward's, and he was now tormented with those pangs of jealousy, with which he had so maliciously attempted to afflict his rival. When he made his addresses seriously to Miss Lewis, she became at once reserved in her conduct towards him; and, as a lover, she no longer admitted him to those familiarities in which, as a relative, she had indulged him. Although determined to persevere in his suit, for he was confident that he should, in time, overcome her aversion, he, for a season, left the city, and returned to his lodgings at Dilworth.

Digitized by Google

He had several inducements for taking this step. During his absence, Harriet's suavity towards him might return. Meredith was likely to be long and far separated from her; for he was informed that his military propensities had, in despite of the remonstrances of his mother and uncle, induced him to accept a captain's commission in the Pennsylvania line, and that he was preparing to join the army under Washington. This separation might be followed by a diminution of her affection for his rival and her aversion for himself, which, by waiting for a proper occasion, he might turn to his advantage. He resolved, therefore, for the present, to abstain from pressing his suit, lest, by an ill-timed urgency, he should irritate her into an irreconcileable aversion towards him.

But Harris had a still more powerful motive than this for returning to the Brandywine. In love, it has been already observed that he was a libertine. Several years of his life had been passed in extreme profligacy and licentiousness. He had been extravagant almost to bankruptcy, and had wooed pleasure to satiety. He had escaped to America from creditors and courtezans, with the remnant of a large furtune, an enfeebled frame, a languid mind, and a half-repentant resolution. His residence on the banks of the Brandywine, afar from the blandishments of vice and the seductions

Digitized by Google

of fashion, soon restored his frame to vigour, his mind to activity, and his tastes and inclinations to their former voluptuous propensities. His extravagant habits alone did not return, for his means were less, and his temptations fewer. Besides, it is probable that experience had taught him the folly of that superfluous waste which produces neither benefit nor pleasure—administers not to vanity, nor gratifies desire.

One of the principal distinctions between a virtuous lover and a voluptuary, is, that the former concentrates all his affections and desires upon one object, while the latter divides them among many. The passion of Harris was, perhaps, as strong for Harriet Lewis as for Mary Balantyne. His views respecting them, however, were different. The one he desired for his wife; the other he had selected for his victim. Harriet was an heiress, and the dissipation of the greater part of his own fortune, naturally rendered him desirous of repairing the loss by a measure so eligible as marrying a rich and beautiful female whom he passionately loved. She was besides of that rank in society and that elevation of character, which rendered his attainment of her in any but an honourable way out of the question. On marriage with her, therefore, if he could possibly effect it, he had set his mind. But his designs

Digitized by Google

with respect to the humble and artless Mary Balantyne, were more flagitious—they were purely sensual. They were conceived in grossness, they were prosecuted with heartless cunning and refined deception, and they were accomplished with an unshrinking depravity—a remorseless villany worthy only to actuate the heart of a demon.

The United Colonies had been declared Independent States. The GREAT ACT of the GREAT CONGRESS of 1776, had broken the chains which held our New World in bondage to the Old, and the allegiance of the West to the East was annihilated for ever. Thousands, therefore, whose scruples had hitherto prevented them from obeying the impulse of their patriotism, now felt absolved from all obligations of political duty to Great Britain, and hastened to encounter her armies as the enemies and invaders of their new-born country.

On the other hand, those who were attached to the interests of Great Britain—and they were numerous in the land—became more zealous than ever in her cause, expressing loudly their indignation against the bold measures of the times, and frequently banding together in armed opposition to the efforts of the young nation so gloriously struggling into existence. The patriots had, therefore, to contend, not with foreign enemies only, but with domestic traitors,

Digitized by Google

whose public hostility was often stimulated by private malice or personal resentment, to the commission of acts of devastation and cruelty more revolting to humanity than any committed by the foreign foe.

Elias Meredith and Adam Balantyne were, as has been already stated, both favourable to the British cause. But they were men of peace; and exerted all their influence to restrain the excesses of the tory bands that infested their neighbourhood. Elias in particular deplored the desolations and the cruelties that were daily taking place. His heart of late had greatly sided with his country, although his sentiments still continued in opposition to the measures she had adopted.

"Alas!" said he to Balantyne one day, that he visited him, after an atrocious midnight attack by the tories upon a whig family—"our neighbour John Barton's family has suffered much. One of his sons has been slain, and one of his daughters so cruelly treated that she is not expected to live, while a great portion of his substance has been carried off or wantonly destroyed. The young man, Charles Harris, with whom thee is very intimate, and for whom I myself long entertained an esteem, is accused of having been active in this matter, in conjunction with James Fitzpatrick, who is already outlawed by the new rulers. Could

Digitized by Google

thy advice not prevail on thy friend to leave off practices which are unworthy of a Christian, and no way beneficial, but rather injurious to the cause of the king, his master?"

"I deprecate as much as you can, the adoption of such sanguinary efforts to intimidate the country into submission; for that is the excuse assigned for these outrages," answered Balantyne. "The loyalty of Mr. Harris carries him, I fear, too far from the path of Christian humanity. He is over-zealous in a good cause. I have remonstrated with him already, although to but little purpose. I will commune with him again on the subject, and shall endeavour to convince him of the impolicy as well as inhumanity of such doings."

"Friend Balantyne," observed Elias, "let me be plain with thee in the matter of this young man. I have heard that he seeketh the love of thy daughter who is an extremely young damsel, and may too easily be duped out of her affections, by a man skilled in flattery and artifice. If her influence over him should enable thee to restrain his excesses, it would be using it for a good purpose. But it behoveth thee to watch over thy daughter's safety, lest she be taken unaware, and become entangled in the snares of the deceitful and the wicked."

"I know your friendly motives for this advice," replied Balantyne. "The affection of

Digitized by Google

Mr. Harris for my daughter has not been concealed from me, and he has declared his intentions to be honourable. The extreme youth of my daughter and the unsettled state of the times, render me unwilling that, at the present period, she should enter the marriage state; and Harris has agreed not to press the affair so far, until a more favourable juncture."

"In this he evinces discretion," said Elias. "But his recent conduct makes me doubt the soundness of his principles, as well as the goodness of his heart. Might he not win thy daughter's affections, and then with the instability of many young men who affect gallantries, throw them wantonly away, and leave her to sorrow and a broken heart. For her sake and thy own, I wish thee to look well to this matter."

Balantyne was struck with the earnestness of his friend. He pressed his hand gratefully. "What you have said," he replied, "has strongly affected me. My child has, I believe, already placed her affections on this young man. I pray Heaven that he may be faithful. But should he not, I will endeavour to fortify her against the disappointment. In the mean time, prudence requires that she should afford him less of her society than usual, and in this matter I shall take care that she be circumspect."

The anxious father, accordingly, gave his

Digitized by Google

parental caution to his daughter. She heard him with considerable emotion. To doubt the fidelity of Charles Harris to her, after all his ardent vows and passionate protestations of love, was a feeling which, at the first impulse, she could not endure. "It would be," she said, "a profanation of the sacred principle of truth, for Charles is all honour and integrity—his promises are solemn obligations which bind his soul, and which it is impossible for him to break!"

Oh! dear deluding power of confiding love! How sweet are the seasons when thou presidest over the soul, and keepest aloof, by thy enchantments, all intruding views of a sorrowful future!

> Oh happy days, when youthful bosoms prove
> The dear delusions of confiding love!

But, alas! such happiness is always transitory. There can never again be a Paradise on earth, else the endearing union of enamoured hearts would, some time or other, lend a sweetness to the cup of life that should never be mingled with any taint of fear, suspicion, jealousy, or regret. But an oracle has said that

> The course of true love never did run smooth;

and all experience has confirmed the melancholy assertion. Mary Balantyne could not, at this time, be persuaded of it; but, alas, even

Digitized by Google

she, in the midst of all her blooming hopes, was doomed to feel that love's

> Sad power to generous hearts may bring
> Delirious anguish on his fiery wing.

Incredulous, however, as Mary was in relation to the possibility of Charles withdrawing his affections from her, her father succeeded in exacting from her a promise that she would see him less frequently, and yield him less encouragement, than heretofore. But Balantyne's solicitude on the subject was too great to be content with this promise, although he doubted not that she would fulfil it. He determined himself to desire Harris to discontinue his addresses, until circumstances should render the prospect of their union more certain.

This intimation was received by Harris with much chagrin. His passion for Mary was in truth one of the strongest that had ever excited his feelings. But it was a passion of the senses, not of the affections. It had comparatively little regard for the welfare of its object. Its own gratification was the great end at which it aimed; and for this it longed with an importunate and burning desire.

Harris, notwithstanding his utter regardlessness of moral obligations, and his general indifference respecting the consequences of his actions to others, had yet so much considera-

Digitized by Google

tion for the innocence and happiness of this sweet girl, as often caused him to pause in the contemplation of his designs against her purity. But these hesitations in the pursuit of crime were with him, though frequent, but feeble. Like meteors in a midnight storm, they gleamed amidst the dark tumult, but were unable to check its course.

Balantyne's interference produced some restraint on the intercourse of the lovers. Mary, as she had promised, for several weeks avoided the places where they had been accustomed to meet; and Harris respected the mandate of her father, so far as not to be guilty of any observable intrusion on her society. They sometimes met, but it was in the presence of others, and apparently by accident; and the timidity of Mary on such occasions, always drove her from the scene as soon as propriety would permit.

This forbearance on the part of Harris, though partly owing to the compunctious visitings just mentioned, were chiefly occasioned by the troubled state of the country, which gave him constant occupation in arranging and directing the marauding enterprises of some bands of tories which he was commissioned by Sir William Howe to organize in the neighbourhood of the Brandywine. But the militia of the country soon became so well trained to the duty of

Digitized by Google

hunting down these marauders, that wherever they appeared, they were attacked and dispersed, and pursued with retaliating fury, until they were too much weakened or intimidated to continue their nefarious practices.

The services of Harris to the royal cause being no longer available in this mode of warfare, about the latter end of October, Sir William Howe appointed him to the command of a troop of cavalry attached to the main army, which he was required to join without delay. On receiving Sir William's orders, he felt much regret at being obliged to leave the vicinity of Mary Balantyne's residence, and he determined not to depart, until he should obtain an interview with her, and, if possible, accomplish the great object of his unhallowed desires. An interview was easily obtained; for the affectionate Mary, when informed of his intended departure, became feverishly anxious once more to be with him, that she might gaze upon his beloved countenance, and receive from his impassioned lips, the farewell assurance of his lasting love.

The meeting took place in a secluded spot, about a quarter of a mile from Balantyne's residence. It was on the bank of a streamlet that gurgled briskly beneath the intermingling branches of the weeping willow. All around the spot the trees and undergrowth grew so tall and close as to form an umbrageous canopy

Digitized by Google

which screened it from the glaring beams of day, and also rendered it inaccessible to the approach of any intruder, save by one narrow and winding path made by the cattle in passing to the rivulet for drink. A short distance from where this path crossed the stream, Harris had formed, upon a dry and grassy portion of the bank, a small arbour among the willows; and here it was that he had first openly revealed his passion for Mary, and had frequently withdrawn with her from the world, in order to repeat the tale of his love. Mary, all guiltless and innocent as she was, saw no harm, and could dream of no danger in these sweet and happy interviews with the man she loved; and Harris, as yet, had never ventured either by word or deed, to alarm her delicacy. With a confiding but palpitating heart, therefore, she stole from her father's side on this fatal evening; and as unsuspicious of guile as a lamb going to the slaughter, she hastened to the arms of her betrayer.

Harris having reached the arbour some time before her, his mind became occupied in contemplating the deed he was about to commit; and wicked and callous-hearted as he was, when he reflected on its direful consequences to the beautiful and innocent being who was to be its victim, and who loved him so tenderly, it is no wonder that he felt frequent compunc-

Digitized by Google

tions, and wavered in his guilty purpose. Oh! that some kind accident had prevented the victim from coming to the sacrifice, the very fiend who longed for the unhallowed oblation, would have had cause to rejoice in his disappointment.

But the victim came. It was one of those serene and balmy evenings whose softness is so peculiar to a Pennsylvanian Indian summer, and when, in the words of a Pennsylvanian poet,

> A sacred feeling, grateful and serene,
> At nature's cheering gray and fading green,
> O'er man's pleased soul enlivening influence throws,
> As oft life's lamp burns brighter at its close.

In such delicious evenings the very elements seem to conspire with the softening influence of love, to render the heart yielding, and to diffuse through the touched frame the warm thrillings of mysterious desire. Harris soon perceived the approach of the beauteous object of his wishes. She advanced lightly and timidly, with a fluttering heart, like a fascinated bird which rushes into the power of the wily serpent that allures it to destruction. * * * He enfolded her to his heart—he poured vows of everlasting fidelity into her ear, and on this eve of a long separation, she could not refuse to interchange them. An impetuous, burning, long-continued kiss, in which an interchange of souls seemed also to have taken place, sealed the compact.

"We are now one!" he exclaimed. "We

Digitized by Google

are now united in the sight of Heaven and of angels; and neither religion, virtue, nor nature require the cold and cumbersome formalities of men to confirm our solemn nuptials, or render holy our most rapturous and impassioned caresses."

His sophistical eloquence flowed like intoxicating poison into her ears. She replied not. A spell—a delirium had come upon her. He pressed her to his bosom. Instinctive modesty was once more awakened. She attempted to repel him But she was overcome—she was *undone.* The sun went down upon their guilty loves, and gathering darkness enveloped a scence which had become accursed by the ruin of innocence.

Alas! how changed now were the feelings of Mary Balantyne? With what horror did her thoughts revolve upon what she had become? The spell that had enwrapt her senses was over. The intoxication of impassioned love was gone. The faculty of reason had returned to her mind, and she saw that she had fallen from a high and happy state of purity and a good conscience, into crime, pollution, degradation, and unabating self-condemnation. Absorbed in these appalling reflections, and viewing her situation with astonishment and horror, she remained silent for many minutes after the completion of her ruin, as if she was afraid to hear the sound of her own voice, now become the voice of a sinner.

Digitized by Google

Harris beheld the agony of her mind. He saw the desolation he had produced—the irretrievable ruin he had brought upon one of the loveliest of the daughters of men. Hard-hearted as he was, he could not but pity her, and he almost regretted the triumph he had gained. He attempted to comfort her; but she seemed not to hear him, for she answered not. At length utterance came to her, and she exclaimed—

"Oh! God! have I lived for this! I am a wretch—a guilty wretch!—Oh! my father—my father!—Oh! Charles, what have you brought me to! Oh! pity me, and lead me to the presence of my father, and let our nuptials be instantly solemnized, or I shall go mad!"

She caught his arm to led him onward. He saw the frenzy of her soul, and felt the stirrings of pity, so that he resisted her not. He supported her homewards, till they came near to her father's house. He then stopped suddenly. His heart had recovered all its selfish feelings and habitual callousness.

"Mary," said he, "we must part here."

"Never!" she cried; "Oh, never shall we part, until in the presence of men, you acknowledge me to be your wife, and prevent my heart from breaking."

"Mary," he said, "you know not the insurmountable obstacles that are, at present, in

Digitized by Google

the way of such an acknowledgment. Insist not on it.—It cannot be."

"What!" she exclaimed bitterly; "and will you leave me deserted amidst the ruin you have brought upon me!—Oh! Charles—dear Charles, you will not." She threw herself on her knees before her despoiler; she caught him by the arm, and looked imploringly upon his face. "Oh! I entreat thee," she said, "by the love I have lavished upon thee, and by all thy hopes of mercy from Heaven, to do me justice, and save me from distraction! If thou hatest me, I will not ask thee to live with me. Only do me justice! and thou mayest forsake me the moment after, if thou canst be so cruel."

"Upon my soul," he replied, "I pity thee from my heart, and I will deceive thee no longer. Marry thee I never can. I have another, a higher and more eligible object in view. Thou hast deserved better treatment from me, I confess. But I was impelled to what I have done, by the irresistible fascinations of thy beauty. I exonerate thee from blame; yet as I know thou art polluted, neither honour, interest, nor feeling will permit me to join my fate with thine."

"Then," she cried wildly, and with an energy which astonished him, "perdition is thine, for Heaven will assuredly avenge me!"

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "dost thou threaten

Digitized by Google

me? The wind of summer might as well try to shake the immoveable fastness of the everlasting hills, as thou to frighten me into a marriage with thee. Our interview to-night began in love; it now terminates in hatred; and our intercourse ends for ever!"

So saying he rudely separated himself from her and departed.

"Not for ever!" she cried hysterically,—"no—no—we shall yet again meet!" She hurried to her father's house. As she approached she saw his revered figure through one of the windows. She shrieked, and ran deliriously to the steps that led to the door, where she fainted and fell. Her father having discovered her absence, but ignorant of where she had gone, was anxiously awaiting her return. He heard her shriek, he knew her voice; in alarm he hastened to the door. He raised her in his arms; he carried her in. Assistance was soon procured. Proper means for restoring her were resorted to. She recovered; but it was to a life of distraction and misery. Not happiness only, but hope itself, the last earthly comfort which lingers in the troubled mind, had forsaken her; and despondency took possession of her soul.

Still she had a tie on earth. There still remained to her, amidst her desolation, one individual in whose happiness she felt interested;

Digitized by Google

and for whose sake, hopeless as she was, she resisted the suggestions of despair. That individual was her father, whose life seemed bound up in hers. Before her recovery, great was his perplexity to know the cause of her distress; and as soon as she could converse, he anxiously questioned her on the subject. An instinctive reluctance to make known her degradation prevented her from revealing it, even before her mind became sufficiently calm for reflection. When she could reflect, however, upon the course she ought to pursue, the affliction into which a knowledge of the truth would plunge her father, and a persuasion that no advantage could result from its communication, determined her to withhold it. She knew that to no species of disgrace would her father be so sensitive as to that which she had suffered. To inform him of it, would totally destroy the comfort of his remaining days; perhaps, even bring him with sorrow to a premature grave.

But how account for the distress into which she had fallen, and the grief under which she continued to labour, and which it was beyond her power to conceal? Her father's solicitude rendered him pressing in his inquiries. Total silence would be considered perversity, and might give rise to suspicions as dreadful as the truth. Ought she to deceive her father? Ought she to invent a fiction, and relate an un-

Digitized by Google

truth? It was an alternative to which no selfish consideration could induce her to stoop. But on this occasion prudential suggestions and filial affection came in aid of the feelings of self. Yet positive falsehood she was determined to avoid. She told part of the trying tale. She confessed that she had held an interview with Harris—that she had stepped beyond the limits of delicacy and pressed him to the solemnization of their nuptials before his departure—that he had insulted and abused her, and left her abruptly with a declaration that he loved her no longer, and would hold no more intercourse with her—that the rudeness of his manner had thrown her into the state in which her father had found her, and that the shock she had sustained in the disappointment of her fondest hopes and the disseverment of her dearest affections, continued to prey upon her spirits, and produced the despondency under which she now laboured.

In this season of affliction, the good Elias did not desert his friend. His consoling attentions were given with the kindness of a brother, and his counsels with the wisdom of a sage.

"Thy daughter," said he, "has had a fortunate escape from an inseparable connexion with a villain. The discovery of his depravity may for awhile occasion her bitter feelings; but time

Digitized by Google

and pious reflections are remedies which seldom fail to cure such sorrows as hers. Cheer her, therefore, and strengthen her mind by the precepts of that religion of which thee was once a public teacher, and fear not, but thee will yet see her contented and happy."

Alas! little did Elias or Balantyne imagine that the sorrows of the unfortunate Mary sprung from a source productive of deeper and more permanent distress than could ever arise from the failure of even love's sweet hopes. Little did either of them suppose that the sharp gnawings of conscious degradation—of shame and remorse for the loss of innocence and purity which nothing could restore—were the venomed furies that corroded her heart, and from the tortures of which all the stores of earthly consolation could afford her no relief.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

The darkest moment just precedes the dawn,
And the fiercest blast the commencement of tranquillity;
So when the fever is at its height, the crisis is at hand;
And as soon as the severest pang has been felt recovery begins.
Zoroaster.

The most gloomy period of the Revolutionary struggle had now arrived. After the defeat at Long Island and the capture of New-York, a series of disasters befell the patriotic cause, which formed the dark season that has been emphatically termed, *the time that tried men's souls.* The great object of the enemy was to obtain possession of Philadelphia, the capital of the Union, the seat of Congress, and the place from which it drew its chief resources. The invaders had overrun the Jerseys, and had pushed their advanced posts as far as Trenton. The army of Washington, the only force opposed to their further progress, had dwindled, by the combined effects of defeats, desertions, and the expiration of the enlistment of many regiments at this critical juncture, to very little more than two thousand men, and these were destitute of almost all the necessary equipments of an army.

But the regular histories of the country have dwelt largely and pathetically on the woful condition and sad prospects of America at this

Digitized by Google

midnight of her calamities. On the zeal, the prudence, the perseverance and the skill of one man alone, did the patriotic and unwavering Congress, and all who despaired not yet of the destinies of the country, rely, under Providence, for safety and final deliverance from their calamities.—Need that man be named here? The hearts of Americans will answer, "No; we know our guardian was WASHINGTON."

As a measure of prudence, Congress had removed from Philadelphia to the town of York; and Washington, with the small devoted band of heroes that still adhered to him, hovered on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, determined to dispute the passage of that river with the whole force of the enemy, in defence of the city.

At this juncture the inhabitants of Philadelphia were not wanting in exertions. A supply of clothing, arms and ammunition, was given to the almost destitute army, and citizens to the number of fifteen hundred enrolled themselves in the ranks of their defenders. These supplies inspired the mind of Washington with renewed energy; and he conceived the design of striking a blow which might revive the drooping spirits of the country, and perhaps turn the balance of fortune in her favour.

It was on the evening of the twenty-third of December, 1776, that Edward Meredith re-

Digitized by Google

ceived a summons from Washington, to attend him at his quarters without delay. Edward obeyed, and, in a few minutes, was in the presence of his illustrious commander.

"Captain Meredith," said the chief, "I am aware of your zeal for the great cause in which we are embarked, and my estimation of your prudence and courage will be amply proved by the proposal I am about to make. You know the deplorable condition to which our army is reduced, and the danger to which our chief city is exposed. If under the present circumstances, that city should fall into the hands of the enemy, the courage of our firmest friends may fail, our reputation abroad may fatally suffer, and our cause be ruined. To avert such a catastrophe, are you willing to undertake the performance of a piece of very dangerous duty?"

"Perfectly willing," replied Meredith, elated with the idea that Washington had thought him worthy of being selected for such a purpose. "In obeying your excellency's orders, I will not shrink from any danger whatever."

"Heaven bless you," said the chief, "and protect you in the enterprise which, I trust, will result in the rescue of your country from her present state of distress and despondency. The advanced post of the enemy is at Trenton.

Digitized by Google

I wish to know its strength and the nature of the position it occupies. If it be such as will warrant an attack, I am seized with a strong desire to carry it, either by surprise or by storm. Our success will, at this moment, be attended with incalculable advantages to our cause. You must undertake the dangerous office of a spy, whether in the character of a deserter, or in the disguise of a tory, I leave it with yourself to determine. But you must endeavour, by to-morrow evening, to bring me such information as will enable me to adopt the best measures for succeeding in my design."

"I am proud of this mark of the confidence of your Excellency," replied Meredith, "and your will shall be obeyed."

Meredith disguised himself as an elderly farmer of the Quaker persuasion, a character which he could without difficulty sustain, and which, he conceived, would subject him much less to interrogation, than that of a deserter. He passed up the Pennsylvania side of the river. When nearly opposite Trenton, he purchased, at a farm-house, some turkies, with which, on the morning of Christmas eve he crossed the Delaware, and appeared in the Trenton market. His poultry being of a choice description, was soon purchased by some Hessian and British officers, who ordered him to

Digitized by Google

carry it to the barracks. He obeyed, and falling into conversation with a communicative British soldier, he soon obtained all the information he required.

He now left the town by the road leading up the river, in order to avoid suspicion of having come from below. He had proceeded but a short distance, when he met a small party of light horse, who had been foraging, guarding a wagon loaded with provisions, which was driven by a countryman towards the town. As they approached, he knew one of the horsemen to be his cousin, Harris. He hastened into the adjoining wood, to avoid too near a contact with one who might recognise him. To his great consternation, the party called after him, and ordered him to stand still. The wood being close, he determined to trust to that circumstance and his own dexterity in penetrating it, for safety, rather than encounter the risk of an investigation in the presence of an enemy who personally knew him. Instantly half a dozen bullets were sent into the wood after him, but happily the trees effectually sheltered him from injury.

"A damned rebel, I'll warrant him, although a Quaker," cried one of the horsemen; "but I'll catch him:" and he hastened into the woods on foot in pursuit. Meredith, however, was as nimble as he, and feared not to be overtaken.

Digitized by Google

But he soon came unexpectedly to the edge of a high precipice that beetled over the river, and over which he had no alternative but to leap or await his pursuer. He preferred the latter, having but little fear of facing one individual, since he was secretly armed with a pistol and a small dagger. His pursuer he knew to be Harris. He had a reluctance to take his life; but it was necessary for his own safety, as well as for the success of his enterprise, that he should disable him. He threw himself down behind the trunk of a large fallen tree, that was convenient. Harris approaching hastily and incautiously, soon received a pistol-ball in one of his legs, which broke it, and he fell. At the same moment he discharged his pistol, but its contents were arrested by the tree behind which Meredith had taken shelter. The latter spoke not, but hurried to the next farm-house, where meeting with a young lad, he sent him to the aid of Harris, and without more delay or obstruction re-crossed the river. Another hour brought him into the presence of Washington, who thus gained the requisite intelligence, which enabled him to form the judicious and well-timed measure which resulted in the capture of the Hessians and British at Trenton, an exploit, whose brilliance broke like the first dawning of a glorious day, upon the darkness which had so long overshadowed the American cause.

Digitized by Google

It would be encroaching on the province of regular history to detail the series of successful exploits performed by the army of Washington, after the spell of misfortune was thus broken by the victory at Trenton. The defeat of the enemy at Princeton soon followed, and the whole of the Jerseys were in a short time freed from the presence of the invaders, who being driven from post to post, were compelled to take shelter in their fastnesses on Staten Island, or in New York.

At the battle of Princeton, however, an incident occurred which it is proper here to relate. The enemy had broken and victory had declared for the American cause, when it fell to the lot of Meredith at the head of his troop to pursue some retreating British cavalry. The rugged and wooded nature of the country compelled the fugitives, and consequently the pursuers, to separate into small parties, each taking different directions. An officer whom Meredith had kept particularly in view as one worthy of capture, at the bottom of a hill, darted suddenly into the woods by an obscure path on the left. Meredith followed singly, calling on the fugitive to surrender. But the latter continued his flight, until his horse stumbled and threw him. The Briton, now on foot, discharged a pistol at Meredith, whose horse received its contents in his head and instantly fell. Both

Digitized by Google

riders being now dismounted, looked at each other for some moments. The fire-arms of neither being loaded, they were about joining combat with their swords, when a voice known to both called on them to forbear. The next moment Francis Holmes rode in between them.

"I call upon you," said he, "not to shed kindred blood. Sir Robert Radnor, your antagonist is the son of the lady of your first love, and he has done you no personal injury."

"True," returned Sir Robert. "His father ran away with Matilda. But he is not responsible for his father's acts."

"But, Sir Robert, you are responsible for your own," observed Meredith, "and I now demand satisfaction for my mother's wrongs?"

"Hush," cried Francis, "I forbid hostilities of every kind. Ye are kinsmen and must not fight. He who first attacks the other, shall have me also for his foe."

"Let Sir Robert surrender as a prisoner of war," cried Meredith, "and I shall sheathe my sword."

"Never!" shouted Sir Robert.

"I forbid that also!" said Francis. "Remember, Mr. Meredith, I too am in the king's service, and you will scarcely be able to capture us both; for if battle must be, I must fight in behalf of my own party."

"Let the youngster become our prisoner!"

Digitized by Google

cried Sir Robert. "We are two to one, and it would be disgraceful to permit his escape."

"I think not so," said Francis; "it would be magnanimity. Public duty does not always require the sacrifice of private friendship. Take my hand, Mr. Meredith, I am, on your mother's account, your friend; and, in Heaven's name, let us have no bloodshed at present."

Meredith's good-nature, added to the necessity which he now saw he was under of yielding, prevailed, and he cordially took the hand which was extended to him, after which he exchanged a short salutation with his kinsman, and departed. His horse having been killed, he was obliged to retrace his way to the main road on foot. He had scarcely gained it, when he was overtaken by Francis.

"I come," said the latter, "to inquire whether, if I surrender myself as your prisoner, you will permit me to live in peace, on my parole, and, if you think proper, under your protection, in the vicinity of your residence on the Brandywine?"

"I shall accept your surrender on those terms," replied Meredith, "but with the warning, that if you should, in any manner, attempt to injure our cause by communicating any information relative to us to the enemy, I will not promise you safety. Spies have been of late repeatedly detected in our camp, and have more than once died for their temerity."

Digitized by Google

"I declare by the honour of a soldier and the faith of a Christian," returned Francis, "that I harbour against your cause no sinister design whatever, and that I never shall be tempted to turn your betrayer. I come to you in truth and sincerity. I am tired of war. I long for tranquillity. Sir Robert and I have not been the most cordial friends for some time past; and he has just hinted that his duty would compel him to report at head-quarters, my interference to prevent your being made prisoner, the issue of which report I have no great desire to abide. I, therefore, knowing his firearms to be unloaded, watched an opportunity when he had gained some distance on the path before me, to wheel suddenly about, gallop after you, and make to you the proposal you have heard. I shall fight no more against you; but I must stipulate that I shall not be compelled to fight against my own country."

"I guarantee to you perfect freedom from any such compulsion," said Meredith. "You were the friend of my mother. You shall, if you please, reside with her. In these dangerous times, your vigilance and activity may contribute to her protection in my absence. I shall, therefore, deem your presence in her household, of much importance; and am pleased at the good fortune which has thrown you in my way as a friend, for I shall take

Digitized by Google

care to prevent your being considered a prisoner."

"Your proposal charms me," replied Francis. "I know not in what better terms to express the satisfaction it affords me than to say that, from your father himself, if he were alive, I could desire no greater instance of friendship."

"But Francis," observed Edward, "let me ask how a man of your peaceful habits, came to leave his home,—for I believe you wrote once to my mother that you were about domesticating in New York,—to follow the rude and tumultuous trade of a soldier in active service?"

"Ah! that scheme of domestication," replied Francis, "turned out an awkward affair. In fact, the damsel jilted me. But happily I had only imagined myself in love, and, therefore, as I soon discovered my mistake, I did not much grieve for the misfortune. I left New York, however, on account of it, and went to Boston, where I became a sort of military attendant upon my old master, Sir Robert Radnor, the hardness of whose steel I prevented you from feeling to-day."

"You saved him from feeling the hardness of mine, I believe," said Edward; "but of that, enough.—You perceive that, at present, we have won the day. We must now hasten to report ourselves to our commander."

Digitized by Google

Edward and Francis were soon in the presence of Washington.

"Ah! you have made a captive?" said the chief.

"No;" replied Meredith, "this is a personal friend, who being tired of war, has voluntarily surrendered himself to me, on condition that I should obtain for him permission to live at peace amongst us, as a neutral. I accepted of the terms, and now ask your excellency's confirmation of them."

"Beware of spies!" said Washington. "They have become rather numerous of late."

"I pledge myself for the sincerity of this man," replied Meredith. "He is an old family favourite, and is too honest for the business of a spy."

"Enough," returned Washington. "Be it as you wish. I have full confidence in your recommendation. Besides, you have a right to ask and receive from me a much greater favour than this."

Francis received his passports, and in a few days had the pleasure of delivering to Mrs. Meredith a cheerful and very welcome letter from her son, and of being settled as an inmate of her family.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

Callous to the best feelings of humanity, must be his heart, who would not grieve for the premature doom of a young and beautiful woman. What then must be the depraved condition of his nature, who could deliberately devise that doom and barbarously persevere in effecting it? *Wharton.*

It could not be considered peculiar to Adam Balantyne, that bitters and sweets had mingled in the cup of his life, for in whose life-cup have they not mingled? But the predominance of the bitters over the sweets had in his been unusually great: nay; the bitters had, at one time, been so intense as almost to extinguish every perception of the sweets. One ingredient only remained to soften and ameliorate their venom, and enable him to tolerate existence,—it was his daughter. Her caresses were the balm that soothed his afflictions—her smiles the sun-shine that dispersed the clouds of his despair. To this daughter, therefore, he was attached with parental ties more than ordinarily strong. From her alone he drew comfort, and for her sake alone did he feel it desirable to live. All his thoughts, his anxieties, his prayers, were for her, and on her welfare depended all his earthly happiness; and alas! through her that happiness was doomed to be blasted for ever.

As the summer of 1777 advanced, the de-

Digitized by Google

pression which, since her last fatal interview with Harris, weighed down the spirits of Mary Balantyne, visibly increased. In vain did her anxious parent endeavour to discover the cause of this aggravation of her affliction. She carefully concealed it. She seldom appeared in company, and when she did, the paleness and pensive expression of her countenance, and the thoughtful abstraction of her manner, indicated the terrible devastation which some unknown grief was making upon her heart.

Her father seldom left her at this period. But being one day invited to visit his friend, Elias, she urged him to comply, alleging that any means by which his mind could be even temporarily diverted from its present solicitude, would tend to relieve her own sorrows. He yielded to her wishes, and set out for the residence of his kind-hearted neighbour. The unhappy state of the times formed the engrossing topic of conversation between these two men of peace, and domestic calamities were for a time forgot in the all-absorbing subject of the fierce war that surrounded them. It was drawing towards the evening, but the friends had not yet thought of parting, when one of Balantyne's servants suddenly entered the chamber where they sat, and almost breathless with haste and terror, informed them that Miss Balantyne was dying.

Digitized by Google

The alarmed father hastened home. He flew to the chamber of his daughter. She was not quite dead, but she was oppressed with a heavy and overpowering stupor which had paralyzed all her faculties, and rendered her powerless and inert. She was in fact fast approaching to a state of utter insensibility. The vital spark seemed quivering on the verge of entire and absolute extinction.

"Oh! my daughter, what has occasioned this dreadful stroke!" cried the heart-pierced father as he bent imploringly over her, where she lay speechless on the couch of sorrow. "Speak, my dear child; speak to thy father—Oh! say, what has caused this new calamity? Heaven save thee, my beloved, my innocent child," he continued, as he observed that she languidly made signs of being conscious of his presence. He caught her hand, she feebly pressed it. Her lips moved in the articulation of some low sounds. He bent to hear them. He thought she mentioned her writing desk. He hurried to it. On opening it, he found the following letter.

"My Dear Father,

"I can live no longer. My life has been for some months but one continued paroxysm of mental agony. My existence much longer would bring upon you the most indelible and unmitigable disgrace that could, by a

Digitized by Google

daughter, be inflicted on a father. My last interview with Harris proved *fatal to my honour.* He ruined me, and then abandoned me for ever.—That interview! alas, it was a stolen one, unknown to you, and granted at his entreaty contrary to your injunctions. Oh! how I have been punished for my disobedience! No one has as yet perceived the effects of my guilt in the alteration of my person. But in a short time it would become too apparent for concealment. Then, then, my father, you would be disgraced for ever; and were I to live, I would see you dying broken-hearted—and I the cause! But I will not live to witness such a calamity. In opium there is power to destroy life, by lulling the senses into lethargy and dissolving the springs of animation. I have provided myself with the precious drug which is to relieve me for ever from that load of earthly misery which has become too great for me longer to endure. Farewell, my beloved father. Oh! do not curse me when I shall be dead, for my last prayer to Heaven shall ascend for thee."

The wretched father scarcely took time to read through this letter, every word of which sent a venomed dagger to his heart and a burning arrow through his brain.

"Leave me and my daughter together," said he to the attendants in this chamber of

Digitized by Google

grief. "I alone shall witness the extinction of her life."

He was obeyed. He locked the chamber-door inside, and, for several hours, poured forth his agonized feelings alone, or was overheard only by superior beings, who, even in their happy sphere, could not but feel sorrow for the incalculable weight of misery which he bore. At length the servants were admitted, and he gave orders in relation to his daughter's funeral with a calmness that surprised them, and which they ascribed to that fearful lassitude which is often induced by despair. He then sent for his friend Elias, who instantly obyed the summons.

"I have at length," said he to his friend, "drunk of sorrow to the very dregs of the cup. Life has now no charm for me; yet for one purpose—inquire not what that is—will I endure it."

"What the purpose is that thee would conceal, it is not my part to inquire," replied Elias. "But I know thy principles to be good, and that as a Christian thee dost fear thy Maker. I hope, therefore, that great as thy sufferings are, thee will remember the duty of submission which is incumbent on all rational creatures, to the great Creator, who can produce light out of darkness, and turn even our calamities into blessings."

Digitized by Google

"I am grateful for the consolation thou wouldst afford," replied Balantyne, "for I know thy friendship is sincere. But my knowledge that the wretchedness of this life cannot last long is my chief consolation. I am unfit, at present, to attend to my worldly affairs. Wilt thou undertake their management for a few days, and see that all things in relation to my daughter's funeral be decently conducted?"

Elias readily consented to charge himself with the task thus entrusted to him. "I have another request to make," said Balantyne. "You may think it an extraordinary one; but I wish greatly to be indulged in it. I desire to be permitted to remain in the chamber with my daughter's corpse, after her shroud and coffin are provided, with no attendant but Francis Holmes, who, I doubt not, will readily wait on me on this melancholy occasion."

Francis agreed without hesitation to watch with the afflicted father over the corpse of his daughter. He had, ever since his coming to reside in the neighbourhood, cultivated the friendship, and had gained much of the confidence of Balantyne. In their political sentiments and aversion to war, they perfectly agreed; and in the misfortunes of his new friend, Francis truly sympathized. Balantyne had, on his part, imbibed such a high opinion

Digitized by Google

of the shrewdness, activity and management of Francis, as well as confidence in his zeal to serve him, that he selected him on the present occasion as the companion who could most readily enter into his feelings, and effect the performance of his wishes.

When Francis arrived, he found Balantyne sitting alone, according to his wish, by the side of the corpse. The latter immediately secured the door.

"Francis," said he, "I will now entrust you with a secret which you must *never* reveal. Will you in compassion to a man bereaved of all earthly happiness, promise me, by the faith and honour of a virtuous bosom, that you never will?"

"I promise you," replied Francis, without hesitation, "for I know that you will ask me to keep no secret which it would be my duty reveal."

"Then read that heart-rending letter, and see the extent of my misery, and of a heartless villain's guilt." So saying, he handed him the letter which he had found in his daughter's writing-desk.

"He is, indeed, a fiend in human form, who has done this!" exclaimed Francis on reading the letter." "Justice demands that he should be punished."

"Yes; yes!" cried the distracted father, with

Digitized by Google

a deep groan. "Surely vengeance on such a wretch must have the sanction of Heaven. Oh! my heart burns for vengeance on the destroyer of my lovely—my tender—my unoffending daughter! I shall never know rest until I have satisfaction for the terrible desolation he has brought upon me."

"But how!—what do you contemplate against him?" asked Francis coolly. "How can you bring him to justice? You have already suffered much for pushing revenge to the extent of bloodshed."

"For taking away a human life, I have indeed been made miserable," replied Balantyne, thoughtfully.—"No—no, I will not slay him."

"What then? Will you apply to his commander for justice?" asked Francis.

"It were needless," returned Balantyne. "My accusation would be disregarded, and my child's shame made known."

"For the same reason, you dare not in any manner, expose her destroyer's infamy to the world. How then do you propose to punish him?"

"Alas! I know not!" returned the disconsolate father. "Leave me for the present. I am bewildered with grief. I am heart-broken and distracted. In half an hour, let us confer again."

Digitized by Google

Francis retired, and the unhappy Balantyne throwing himself on a couch, gave vent, in unwitnessed tears, to the sorrows that preyed upon his heart. These tears were the first he had shed since this last calamity had assailed him. They afforded him some relief—they moderated the fever that was burning in his brain and giving delirium to his thoughts. When Francis returned, he found him much more collected, and better qualified to reason on the course of life he should pursue. That course was soon determined on; and Francis engaged to adhere to him in its prosecution as a friend, an adviser, and assistant. "My own concerns," said he, "require but little of my attention. Your life has been hitherto a pathway of thorns which have sorely wounded you; and now, alas, they pierce you to the quick. I feel for you too strongly to refuse my aid amidst your distress. On my fidelity and attention you may rely; and whatever consolation it may be, at any time, in my power to bestow, shall freely and zealously be yours."

"Write then—write immediately to the destroyer, an account of the awful result of his villany," said Balantyne. "Let him feel, as soon as possible, the tortures of remorse, if he be capable of feeling them. I have endured remorse, and know the terrible severity of its gnawings. If he has the conscience or the

Digitized by Google

heart of a human being, he will never know earthly happiness after he receives information of the destruction he has brought on her who trusted in him and who loved him. Haste, therefore, to write. It is but justice to make him miserable without delay."

* * * * *

Mary Balantyne had been beloved by every one who knew her. Even the maidens who envied her beauty, were propitiated by the kindness and gentleness of her manners; and, as for the youths of her acquaintance, they had always been unanimious in their respect for her virtue and admiration of her loveliness. Her premature death was, therefore, greatly lamented; and her bier was accompanied to the grave by a numerous assemblage of real mourners. Among these, there was one young man who felt more deeply than the rest. He had long loved her with a passion as ardent, disinterested and constant, as ever burned in a lover's bosom. But she did not return his affection. Perhaps she had been too young when he first declared it—perhaps he was too timid and reserved to press his suit with sufficient ardour—or perhaps—But why attempt the vain task of accounting for the caprice of a young maiden's fancy who knows that she is handsome, and who feels that she is born to be admired? Mary

Digitized by Google

Balantyne could and did accord to William Barton, her most cordial esteem, but her love —alas! it was fated to be bestowed upon one who deserved it not; one who abused the precious boon and, without compunction, destroyed the beauteous donor. And such men have been on earth; yea, such are even now to be found on its polluted surface, mingling unblushingly, and unmarked as villains, among their fellowmen! Oh, Heaven! forgive those who, knowing that such things are, wonder at thy forbearing to lift the arm of vengeance to extirpate the wretches from the limits of thy fair creation!

William Barton was the son of that John Barton whose sufferings from tory atrocities have already been noticed as awakening the sympathies and indignation of Elias and Balantyne. He had been long a favourite pupil of the latter, and from the earliest dawn of his affections he had placed them entirely on the fascinating Mary. She was his dream by night, and his contemplation by day. She was in truth all he could fancy of female loveliness and perfection. And although unable to elicit reciprocal feelings in her bosom, he was not the less ardently devoted to her as the sole idol of his earthly worship.

During the funeral he was the object of

Digitized by Google

universal but respectful commiseration; and after all others had withdrawn from the grave, he remained alone there to weep over the hallowed spot. The observant eyes of Francis Holmes beheld him, and when all the people were gone, and solitude and silence once more surrounded the place, he approached him:

"Forgive my interruption of your sorrows, young man," said he. "Believe me, I sympathize with you, and approach you in friendship, and with an earnest desire to administer to you consolation."

"Can you restore to my sight the fair being who lies beneath this earth?" said the mourner. "If you cannot, you will try to console me in vain. When she lived, I loved her too well for my own happiness: and over her grave I may be permitted to mourn at the early extinction of those charms on which I have so often gazed with rapture, but which, alas! I shall behold no more."

"William Barton, you are reputed to be a valliant and active youth," returned Francis, "and such I should expect, would not give way to unavailing sorrow. I have heard of your bold enterprises against the tory bands that lately infested this neighbourhood, and have been informed that you have taken from them ample satisfaction for the injury they in-

Digitized by Google

flicted on your father's family. One of them—he too who dealt the blow against your kindred—was the destroyer of your love—"

"Ha! name him not!" interrupted Barton. "His very name is torture to me."

"Would you have him brought to a sense of his wickedness? Would you make him feel how much he has injured you? Would you wish him punished for his villany towards her you loved, and have lost for ever?" said Francis.

"Ask him who is weary, if he will have rest—him who is hungry, if he will have food, or the thirsty man, if he will accept of a cooling draught. Yes; bring the destroyer only within my reach, and I shall be satisfied."

"Meet me to-night at the house of the father of your lost Mary, and you will learn that which will yield consolation to you both in your present affliction. I will explain no further now. But fail not to come, and you shall have comfort."

"I would avoid that venerable man in his present distress," observed Barton, "lest the presence of one who loved his daughter so well, might aggravate his sorrow. But there is an earnestness in your manner which persuades me that you mean well, and I shall meet you."

"I am the friend of Balantyne, and you

Digitized by Google

shall find me yours also; therefore, fail not," said Francis; and leaving Barton to his mournful meditations over the grave of her he loved, he hastened to the residence of Balantyne."

Digitized by Google

Y.P.L. R. 7/1927.

CHAPTER XIII.

Why canst thou not, philosophy, resolve
Whether the spirits of the dead e'er walk
The earth, to speak with those they've left behind?
If thou know'st not, philosophy, confess
Thy ignorance, and dare not to dispute
What thou canst not disprove.

Shirley.

The success which attended the judicious and active movements of Washington during the winter and spring of 1777, having frustrated the efforts of Sir William Howe to penetrate to Philadelphia, by way of the Jerseys, he, in the fall of the same year, resolved to attempt effecting that object by another route. Accordingly, aided by the powerful fleet commanded by his brother, Lord Howe, he landed in full force, near Elkton, at the head of the Cheaspeake Bay.

Washington, well aware that the possession of Philadelphia was the great object of this enterprise, hastened with his whole force to oppose the advancing enemy. After much manœuvering and some skirmishing, the two armies met on the 11th of September, on the banks of the Brandywine, when a general engagement ensued, which resulted in the British effecting their passage over the river and driving the Americans from the field of battle. The tories, in consequence, once more acquir-

Digitized by Google

Cincinnati 1810

ed the ascendancy in the neighbourhood of Dilworth; and Harris, now captain of a company of dragoons, being once more among his old confederates, became very active in re-organizing their scattered bands. The notorious Fitzpatrick again appeared at the head of his desperadoes; and excesses which the regular troops of Britain were not permitted to commit, were, without hesitation, perpetrated upon the lives and properties of the whigs of the district, by those lawless natives of the country.

Balantyne was not, at this time, an inhabitant of the neighbourhood. Shortly after the calamity related in the last chapter, had assailed him, he not only relinquished his occupation as a teacher, but secretly withdrew from his residence. He left a letter for his friend Elias, desiring him not to be alarmed for his safety, and requesting him to take charge of his dwelling and other property, until he should hear further from him.

Harris soon ascertained that the man whom he had so grievously injured, was out of the way. Francis's letter had before made him acquainted with the fate of his once loved Mary. Not fearing, therefore, to meet with any one at the deserted mansion of Balantyne, who would reprimand him for his misconduct, he, without scruple, and in defiance of the remonstrances of Elias, seized upon it, and made it the quarters of his troop.

Digitized by Google

There is a sentiment of an amiable nature, of which even the most depraved minds are not totally devoid, that causes us to feel pleasure in retracing scenes, from which we have been for some time absent, where we have enjoyed any excitement of the affections, or indulged any imaginings of passion or dreams of romance. Hence, unfeeling and regardless as Harris was in relation to the misfortunes he had brought upon Mary Balantyne, he could not view the scenes of their frequent and endearing intercourse with indifference. He visited all the well-remembered places where they had been in the habit of meeting; and, in his better and softer moments, felt growing over him a tenderness and regard for her memory, which even surprised himself, but which, as they were agreeable emotions, he cherished with eagerness and zeal.

On the evening of the second day after he had taken possession of Balantyne's house, he wandered towards the scene of their guilty loves. He had even the hardihood, although not without experiencing some touches of compunction in his breast, to approach the fatal arbour. When about entering it, however, bold and daring as he was, he hesitated. A thousand strange thoughts rushed upon his mind. His spirit faltered, and he turned to retrace his steps, when he heard distinctly the awful

Digitized by Google

C. R. Dudley
1840

sounds of "Wo! wo! wo!" uttered in a voice which, in dispite of its hollow and unearthly tone, he well remembered as hers whom he had on the spot whence it issued, sacrificed to his wicked passions. His heart became weak and cowardly. He fled from the place. But, when some distance from it, he became ashamed of his retrograde movement. It might have been but the excitement of imagination that had formed these fearful sounds. And did it become him—a man of the world and a soldier—to be overcome by a non-entity, an ideal mockery! He resolved not to harbour even the consciousness of having been so easily frightened. Besides, he began to suspect that, if the voice had not been altogether imaginary, it might have proceeded from some person desirous of playing him a trick, and who had, consequently, become acquainted with the timidity he had displayed, and would, no doubt, expose it so as to render him an object of ridicule among his companions. Such a thought he could not endure. He, therefore, again turned his steps towards the arbour. And again, from some inexplicable cause, he became alarmed as he approached it. He stole slowly and cautiously forward, as if he were afraid to apprize the attendant spirit of the fatal spot of his presence. He strained to the utmost, his faculties of seeing and hearing, in or-

Digitized by Google

der that nothing, whether earthly or unearthly, should take him by surprise. The wind was gentle, but to his excited senses, it moved audibly, with fitful sighs, among the trembling leaves of the pendent willows that surrounded him. As he drew near to the arbour, these sighing sounds became more distinct, and evidently much louder than was consistent with the mild condition of the wind. At length the articulate sounds of "Ruin! ruin!" struck upon his ear. A sudden chillness crept over him—he faltered in his pace, but it was only for a moment. He struggled with his weakness. His courage returned, and he determined not to yield again to the influence of terror, be its cause either real or imaginary.

With a violent effort, he advanced to the entrance of the arbour. But he advanced no further; for there now stood before his terrified vision a figure which sent a cold shuddering through all his veins, and almost froze the current of his life at its fountain. It was the figure of Mary Balantyne in her winding sheet, shadowy, thin, pale, pensive and awfully solemn in her looks. She shook her head slowly and mournfully as she fixed a withering gaze upon him. He would, in the surprise of his first recognition of her appearance, have sunk to the ground, but for the support he obtained from the branch of a tree, at

Digitized by Google

which he caught, while his enfeebled joints trembled beneath him. Harris, however, was neither cowardly nor superstitious, and he had long indulged in absolute scepticism regarding the spirits of deceased human beings becoming visible on earth. In a few seconds, therefore, he began to rally his fortitude, and soon recovered sufficient firmness to look at the apparition and address it.

"Who art thou," said he, "that assumest the likeness of one who is dead, and cannot consequently be now standing before me?"

"Wretched man!" the figure replied, and its voice thrilled fearfully like electric fire along the nerves of the awe-struck criminal; "remember this fatal spot. Dark is thy doom. We meet again!"

The apparition then slowly faded away among the foliage at the back part of the arbour, and became invisible, like a thin mist disappearing from the side of a green hill, or a light cloud by moonlight, sinking behind the waving tops of the dusky trees. The terrified culprit was for some time scarcely sensible of the departure of the awful image. His fixed gaze was riveted, as if, by enchantment, on the spot where it had stood, and its fearful words still tingled in his ears. His perceptions, at length, gradually returned to their natural state, and he became sensible of his true situation.

Digitized by Google

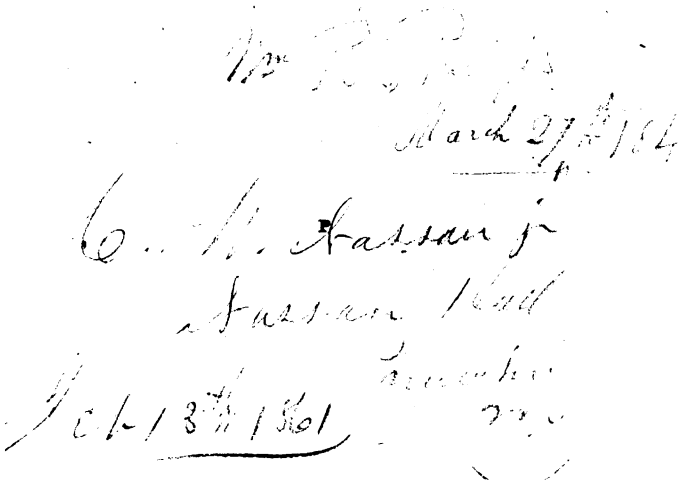
His strength of frame was restored, and perhaps his hardihood, but not his tranquillity of mind. He hastened to his quarters. But his conscience was now disturbed, and he no longer, reflected with pride or complacency on the triumph he had gained, in the shades of Dilworth, over the innocence and virtue of the loveliest maiden they had ever screened from the glare of the noon-tide sun. But although frightened into remorse, he was not humbled into penitence. Instead of seeking tranquillity in a fixed resolution to sin no more, he sought oblivion for his troubles in the intoxicating revel; and in the jovial carousals of his brother officers, the remorseful impression made on his feelings by the awful apparition in the arbour, was soon, for a time, obliterated.

Perhaps this power of affording temporary relief to the conscience-struck mind, is the most mischievous in its effects upon mankind, that is possessed by inebrieting fluids. Thousands who would be driven by the goadings of remorse to seek geninue relief in amendment of life, fly to the fallacious substitute which is offered in the hilarity of the bowl; and instead of cherishing that salutary regret for past misconduct which would naturally lead to reformation as the only means of regaining tranquillity, they seek a transient refuge from remorse in the turbulence of a fleeting madness,

Digitized by Google

which removes every good impression, and confirms every evil propensity.

On the return of sobriety, however, Harris felt his mind ill at ease. Every object in and around the place where he had fixed his quarters, reminded him of his crime and of the awful vision which had denounced him for it. He hastened to remove from the neighbourhood, and, for the purpose of diverting his mind from the unpleasant subject that perpetually obtruded itself upon him, he plunged with unwonted activity into the exciting scenes of the desultory warfare in which he was now engaged.



Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

Hast thou fallen, enfeebled and bound, into the hands of thine enemy? and thinkest thou he will have mercy on thee? Oh! no.—Thy innocence will plead for thee in vain, for thy foe valueth not the eschewer of crime. The guilty man who promoteth his evil designs, is more precious in his sight than the saint who opposeth his guilty career. Hast thou virtuously resisted him? and art thou in his power? Then Heaven alone can save thee. But Heaven is all-sufficient.

Maxims of Amram.

Edward Meredith was, at this time, extremely active at the head of his troop, in harassing the foraging and marauding parties of the British and tories, and in protecting the persons and properties of the whigs from their attacks. For this service, he was peculiarly well qualified by his knowledge of the country, which was now the seat of war, as well as by his zeal to defend his immediate friends and neighbours from the spoliations and personal outrages daily inflicted on them by victorious and insolent foes, who denounced them, and often treated them, as rebels unworthy of mercy. He had heard of Harris occupying the house of Balantyne, and he was making preparations to dislodge him from it, when he was informed that he had suddenly abandoned it. He was, however, determined to make some effort to capture Harris. He knew him to be in league with the notorious depradator, Fitzpatrick, whose band of native prowlers, was,

Digitized by Google

at that time, more dreaded by the whig inhabitants of the country, than the foreign enemy. From the latter, submission procured exemption from attack; but nothing could mollify the rancour of the former, who were goaded to hostility more by feelings of private resentment or a desire for plunder, than by any sense of public duty.

Meredith was at this time attached to the division of the army commanded by General Wayne, who belonged to the same neighbourhood, and was equally solicitous to protect its patriotic inhabitants from the evils of the disastrous war which now surrounded them. It was on the evening of the twentieth of September, while Edward was consulting with the General on the propriety of penetrating with a chosen band, through the most private paths of the country, in order to come unawares upon the depredators, he received information that his own house had been plundered and destroyed by the troops of Harris.

"Ah!" cried Wayne, "that decides the question. That ruffian cousin of yours, must be seized at all risks, or he will not leave a respectable house standing in the country. You see that your mother's loyalty has not been able to protect her residence from the destructive rage of her own relative. The rebelliousness of her son is, no doubt, to be thanked for

Digitized by Google

this. I hope she herself has suffered no personal injury."

"I thank Heaven," said Meredith, "that my mother is at a safe distance from the barbarians. I conveyed her to Philadelphia immediately on learning that the enemy had landed in our neighbourhood. I believe also, that the enemy found little but the walls of our house to destroy, as on my mother's departure, my uncle undertook to have every thing valuable conveyed to his own residence."

"That's lucky enough," observed Wayne. "Your uncle's toryism will surely be sufficient to protect his own house, though it could not preserve that of his nephew.—But for revenge —or justice, if you prefer a milder word—in Heaven's name, start off with a hundred men, and either by force or stratagem, bring the barbarian to me dead or alive."

At that moment, they perceived a horseman hastily approaching.

"Delay one moment! Here are tidings," cried Wayne. Edward paused. In a few seconds, William Barton alighted, and informed them that a strong British force was rapidly approaching with the hope of attacking their encampment by surprise.

"Let them come," said Wayne, coolly. "We are not very numerous, it is true, and my men have prepared for their night's rest,

Digitized by Google

for they are much fatigued. But with Heaven's help, we shall stand our ground and try them. Captain Meredith, to your post on the left. I cannot now spare you. When this affair shall be over, you may hunt the ruffian Harris as speedily as you please."

"That ruffian," cried Barton, "you will not have far to hunt. I am greatly mistaken, if he will not be among your assailants to-night."

"Heaven send that I may meet him front to front in the battle!" said Meredith, and he hastened to the post assigned him.

The British under General Gray were soon on the field of Paoli. They approached on the right of the Americans where the artillery was stationed, and where an effectual resistance might have been made. But the officer who commanded there, being too slow in obeying the orders of Wayne to advance against the assailants, suffered the latter to approach so near that they charged his men with their bayonets, before they were prepared for resistance. They were consequently put to flight. Wayne hastened with other troops to their support. But it was in vain. The enemy's battalions were too numerous for the force he commanded, and he was obliged to leave the field with the loss of nearly one fourth of his patriot band, who being thus

Digitized by Google

taken almost by surprise, were slaughtered on that disastrous night.

Edward Meredith's post, which was on the extreme left of that memorable field, had been gallantly defended against a powerful attack of the enemy's cavalry, who, but for this resistance, would have surrounded the main body of the Americans, and prevented the retreat which Wayne fortunately effected with the survivers of the conflict. But Edward's bravery on this occasion cost him dear. He was wounded and taken prisoner; and what added greatly to his mortification, his captor was his arch-enemy, Harris.

"Ah! intermeddler!" exclaimed the latter, "I have you, at length, in my power. And, blest be the fates! you shall not remain much longer an obstacle between me and Miss Lewis."

"I am in your power only as a captive," replied Edward; "and I demand the protection due to a prisoner of war."

"Fitch!" cried Harris, "I wish not to argue with your young Brandywine rebel. He spouts too much morality for me. Carry him to your subterranean stronghold. Let none of our officers see him. I would not have them know that he is captured. Guard him strictly. I shall be with you by noon to-morrow."

Fitch, who was no other than the noted

Digitized by Google

G W Dudley 1840

Fitzpatrick mentioned already in this history, assisted by several other men, immediately dragged Edward to an adjoining obscure hollow in the midst of the woods, where having examined his wound, which was in his right shoulder, and found not to be dangerous, they placed him on horseback, and travelled with him all night, by unfrequented paths, until they came to the foot of a high and rocky precipice, at the bottom of which flowed a rapid running stream. Here they halted underneath a gigantic overhanging rock, around and above which towered the tall and dark branches of the mountain pines.

"Mr. Meredith," said Fitch—"for I can't call you Captain, as you don't hold the king's commission—you must now dismount and follow me."

"You speak imperatively, Major Fitch," replied Edward. "You perceive I do not grudge you your title. I envy it too little for that. As for your imperative mood—why you only follow the example of your employers.—Lead on!"

Fitch replied only with a wild sarcastic laugh, which indicated a feeling of indifference rather than ill-nature at the rebuke. He then ascended the hill by a narrow path near the rock. Edward ascended also, and was followed by five or six of his escort. After

Digitized by Google

clambering about eighteen or twenty yards, they reached the top of the rock, which presented a flat portion of ground ten or twelve yards square, thickly covered with pine trees, which curtained the face of the hill, and amidst which they were soon concealed.

"Here is an asylum for true men, but a prison for rebels. Be pleased to enter, Mr. Meredith," said Fitch, pointing to a perpendicular cleft in the rock which was nearly concealed from view by a large tree that grew within a few feet of it. "Our accommodations may not be of the first order, but such as they are, you are welcome to them."

"With so polite an invitation, it would be uncivil to refuse compliance," replied Meredith, and he bowed ironically to his sarcastic conductor, as he entered his rude prison.

"Faith, Meredith," observed Fitch, as he followed him, "you are a pleasant fellow, with a stout heart, and I bear you, in truth, no great degree of ill-will, except for being a vile rebel like many other hot-headed fools of our acquaintance.—But you have, some how or other mortally displeased Captain Harris, who swears you must be *put out of the way*. Faith, 'tis a pity; you're so young and spirited. But fretting is useless; for, hang it, the Captain's will must be obeyed."

"But my destruction will undoubtedly bring

Digitized by Google

upon Harris the displeasure of his superior officers, as being a violation of the usages of war." said Meredith.

"Oh! faith, it may be so, should it come to be known. But that is a matter for the Captain's own consideration. At present, there is your resting-place," replied Fitch, pointing to a quantity of rustic bed-clothes which were spread between two logs on the floor of the cavern.

Meredith seated himself on one of the logs in silence. He believed it to be a waste of words, and a derogation of dignity, to pursue the conversation further in relation to himself, with a man he so thoroughly despised. He was determined also to manifest in his presence, no great degree of concern for his situation. He, therefore, partook freely of the refreshments which were soon placed before him, and affected to enjoy the broad mirth and humour of the low jests and vulgar songs, with which his entertainers, after becoming elated with various liberal potations of brandy, amused themselves until, overcome with their previous fatigue and their present debauchery, they all, except one who acted as sentinel, threw themselves down on the floor of the cave, and sought repose.

Meredith now leisurely surveyed the extent of his rocky prison. It was near mid-day, and

Digitized by Google

the light of the sun penetrated the gloomy recess sufficiently to make the objects around him perceptible, especially as his eyes were becoming familiarized to the darkness of the place. There was, however, little to be seen. With the exception of a quantity of fire-arms and other instruments of war, and some blankets on which Fitch and his drowsy companions were stretched, the furniture was merely such as is usually found in a rustic and slovenly kept kitchen. Meredith conceiving that this cavern was one of the grand depots of tory plunder, had expected to find himself surrounded by much of the valuable property of which the neighbouring whigs had, of late, been so abundantly robbed. But nothing of the kind was visible. It is true, he did not see far into the cavern. His eye could not penetrate its dark and winding recesses. He could not tell the extent of its capacity. It might have even other communications with the open air than that by which he had entered. He was acquainted with several caverns which were merely elongated passages under ground with an entrance at each extremity. Such a one would naturally be preferred as the lurking place of robbers and desperadoes, as affording them, in case of being attacked at the one entrance, means of escape by the other.

These reflections suggested to Edward the

Digitized by Google

possibility of effecting his own escape by such means. He cast his eye wistfully towards the dark interior. His arms alone were bound. The sentinel kept watch outside of the cave, and had not yet looked into it. The other tories were all asleep. He could, at least, satisfy his curiosity respecting the extent of his prison, and ascertain whether it contained any thing more remarkable than he had yet discovered. He moved cautiously past Fitch and his sleeping companions, and had advanced to an angle of the subterraneous passage, when he heard the sound of voices conversing with the sentinel at the entrance. He hastened back to his rude couch, and had soon the mortification to perceive Harris, with five or six soldiers, approaching towards him. The noise of their entrance awakened the sleepers, who instantly started to their feet.

"So, Captain Fitch, your prisoner is yet safe, I perceive," said Harris, casting a look of scowling hatred at Meredith.

"Yes, to be sure," replied Fitch. "You did not suppose he could escape from this den with so many stout fellows around him."

"I supposed it not," returned Harris. "But, Fitch, some how or other, it has become known to General Gray that we have this prisoner, and he has ordered him to be brought to head quarters and treated well."

Digitized by Google

"I have no objection," said Fitch, "for I respect young Meredith there as much as e'er a rebel among them, and did not quite like your intentions this morning."

"You did not, eh!" returned Harris, haughtily and impatiently. But in a moment he assumed a cooler tone as he added, "It was no concern of yours, Fitch. You understood not my motives.—But it is a pleasant day for ranging. A gallant troop waits without. Buckle up, my brave fellow, and with your men, lead us to the habitation of some rich whig that we may replenish our coffers. I wish to be five minutes alone with our prisoner. I will then follow you."

Harris was speedily obeyed, and Edward was left alone, bound and unarmed, in the presence of his most inveterate foe.

"Meredith," said the latter, with a look of ferocity intended to produce intimidation, "thank fate, you are now in my power. You see these pistols. They are loaded with deadly shot. You see that paper; it contains the only condition on which I will permit you to live. Read it, and sign it, or in five minutes you shall be a dead man."

Edward read the paper as follows:

"To Miss Harriet Lewis,

"You were once the object of my fond attachment. I addressed you sincerely

Digitized by Google

with a view to our final alliance, and we became engaged.. Circumstances have lately given another direction to my views. It is, therefore, my duty to release you from your engagement. I do this the more readily and promptly, because I am aware that my cousin, Captain Harris, of the British army, has placed his affections upon you, and I am desirous of being no longer considered an obstacle to the success of his suit.

"Assure yourself of the continuance of my profound respect."

"Insolent miscreant!" exclaimed Meredith, tearing the paper into fragments. "Do you imagine that my feelings are as base and depraved as your own, so as to render me capable of stooping to the infamy of signing such a paper! No; no; do your pleasure. I will accept of life on no such terms!"

"Then, by Heaven! I must get rid of you as a rival in some way, and it would be folly to lose the present opportunity!" cried Harris, as he presented one of the pistols at Edward's breast, adding, "Mutter a short prayer, for you are on the verge of eternity!"

At that moment, a voice, issuing from the dark interior of the cave, cried out, "Forbear!" in a tone which made Harris turn pale and tremble at every joint. An instant af-

Digitized by Google

ter, the same awful apparition which had visited him in the arbour near Dilworth, advanced from amidst the darkness, and frowned fearfully upon him. The instrument of intended murder fell from his hands, and he staggered towards the rocky wall of the cavern for support, while the following soul-harrowing words were addressed to him.

"Wretch! wouldst thou commit another diabolical crime, that another aggrieved spirit may haunt thy footsteps, and render thee as miserable as thou art accursed! Thou needest care for no rival, for she whom thou didst destroy shall be alone thy bride, and that shall be on thy dying day. Hearken, and let my prophecy sink into thy soul.

"No maid on earth thou e'er shalt wed:—
But SHE now numbered with the dead,
Upon thy fearful day of doom,
To be thy bride shall leave the tomb!
Hear, wretch, and loose that prisoner's chain,
Or tremble when we meet again!"

So saying, the apparition again mingled with the darkness of the cavern, and left Edward Meredith equally astonished, although not equally terrified, with the guilty object of its visit.

It was some minutes before Harris could recover sufficient recollection and firmness to obey the order of the spectre to release the prisoner, which still sounded awfully in his ears. At length

Digitized by Google

he convulsively rushed towards Meredith, and hastily loosening the fastenings that bound his arms, without uttering a word, he hurried frantically out of the cavern. The fresh air and the presence of his soldiers soon restored his self-possession. He ordered the sentinel to leave the cavern and permit Meredith to escape, informing Fitch that he would satisfactorily account to General Gray for so doing. He then marched off with his party to the quarters of that officer.

The amazement of Edward Meredith at this miraculous interposition, by which he was snatched from the jaws of death, may be easily imagined. To account for it was beyond his power. That the being who so providentially interfered in his behalf, was from the land of spirits, he could scarcely doubt, for it exhibited the express form, features, and voice—and in a corpse-like condition,—of one whose likeness he could never forget, and of whose death several months before, he had been well assured. Yet his reason had been so long accustomed to reject the belief that spiritual beings ever assume material and visible forms, that he knew not how to reconcile what he had witnessed with his preconceived convictions on the subject. His philosophy and his experience being thus at issue, it is no wonder that, as often as he thought upon the strange occur-

Digitized by Google

rence, he became perplexed, and was tempted to abandon the most apparently conclusive deductions of philosophy as being opposed to the evidence of his senses.

It was not, however, at the moment of his deliverance, that he permitted his mind to revolve on these intricate points. Time was then too precious to be wasted in thought. Self-preservation called for instant action. He hastened to the mouth of the cavern; and, as soon as the troops of Harris had disappeared, he descended the hill, and in about twenty minutes, found himself under the hospitable roof of a trusty friend attached to the patriotic cause. Here he remained for a few days; the bodily fatigue, long watchfulness, and extreme excitement of mind he had undergone, independently of his wound, which now pained him considerably, rendering some repose indispensable for the recovery of his strength and spirits. His convalescence, however, was rapid; and to the great joy of his brother officers, as well as that of his favourite troop, he was soon again at its head, ready to lead it against his country's foes.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

The warlike hosts extend their long array,
In gaudy dress and polished arms they shine;
Their haughty banners glittering to the day,
Diffuse a martial throb through all the line.
Now swells the trumpet's voice and rolls the drum,
The proud steed neighs, and shakes his curving main:
Now Heaven forbid that venturous foe should come,
In search of vict'ry on th' embattled plain,
For then on throne of blood, Death's awful power would reign.
Thaunus.

It was on a beautiful afternoon towards the latter end of September, 1777, that Lord Cornwallis, at the head of his grenadiers, led the van of the British army, in triumphal procession into Philadelphia. And, in truth, the numerous gay and finely appointed battalions of both horse and foot, which followed him, made, that day, a splendid and gallant appearance. Thousands of the inhabitants of both the whig and tory parties, covered the side-ways and filled the balconies and windows of the streets, to witness the imposing spectacle. What various and opposite emotions, on that occasion, agitated the bosoms of those spectators! From patriotic hearts, notwithstanding the novelty and brilliancy of the scene, what sighs did it draw! and how many generous and virtuous bosoms swelled with sadness on comparing the gay and comfortable appearance of those enemies of their country's rights, with

Digitized by Google

the almost destitute condition of her armed defenders! On the other hand, such were the divided sentiments of the time, that many hearts, attached to the cause of British greatness, felt elated at this display of her martial grandeur, and welcomed the warriors of the "ocean-cinctured isle," whose name they had so long venerated, with animated cheers, as conquering friends who had delivered them from the rule of an insurrectionary party that had seized the government of the country, and overturned those political institutions which they revered, and under which they were still desirous to live.

To the cheering of these were added the acclamations of a still more numerous class of citizens—the thoughtless, the giddy, and the indifferent, who cared little respecting the final success of either party. To them the gaudy dress and glittering arms, the stately and well regulated march, the animating and "spirit-stirring" music, the magnificent standards waving radiantly in the air, and all the other pompous pageantry of exciting war, were objects of admiration which drew forth their vociferous applause.

The state of the city was, indeed, at this time favourable to this display of cordiality in the reception given to the royal army. As soon as the result of the battle of Brandywine

Digitized by Google

was known, the speedy occupation of the city by the victors, was expected by all parties. The greater portion of the whig population, therefore, with their families and effects, retired from it without delay, and left their political opponents and those who were but lukewarm patriots, to yield the invaders whatever reception they might think proper.

Thus Sir William Howe, at length, gained the dazzling prize for which, during two hard-fought campaigns, he had lavished so much blood and treasure—the CAPTURE OF PHILADELPHIA. And what did he or his government profit by this anxiously desired and much vaunted achievement? Did it, in any degree, facilitate the subjugation of the young nation with which they were combatting? Did it, in any manner, contribute to the extension of British power or influence over this or any other country? No;—its effects were the very reverse of all this. It, for many months, paralyzed the efforts of a large and well-appointed army. It did more. It corrupted the martial spirit of that army by exposing it to the enervating influence of a gay and luxurious city, which, in fact, became the fascinating Capua that rendered the warlike officers of Britain effeminate, and her private soldiers impatient of discipline. This solves the riddle of America having been a gainer by the loss of her chief

Digitized by Google

M. D. Dallas
1842

city, and proves the accuracy of the remark made by the sagacious Franklin, when he first heard of the event,—that Sir William Howe had not taken Philadelphia, but that Philadelphia had taken Sir William Howe.

In this view of the matter, it might be questioned whether the obstructions which Washington so anxiously threw in the way of Howe's obtaining the city, were judicious, or worth the sacrifices which they cost? I have no hesitation in saying that they were decidedly judicious. It was the duty of Washington to obstruct the invaders in all their views, and to harass and annoy them in all their movements, not only because it diminished their power and embarrassed their operations, but because it acquired a reputation for the American cause which was then very desirable, both to inspire confidence in its friends at home, and to secure the aid solicited from other countries. There is, indeed, good reason to believe that, had the Americans not appeared able to do something for themselves, the powerful assistance which was, soon after this period, received from a great European monarchy, would never have been obtained.

But I have unwarily plunged into a strain of political speculation which the limits prescribed for this work will not permit me to prolong, and which, perhaps, may not be altoge-

Digitized by Google

ther suited to its character. I shall, therefore, return to my narrative.

It has been already mentioned, that as soon as the neighbourhood of the Brandywine became likely to be the seat of war, Mrs. Meredith had for greater security removed to Philadelphia. Her feelings and wishes respecting the belligerent parties were now much changed from what they had been at the commencement of hostilities. It is true, there still lurked in her mind, many prejudices in favour of the British name and character. But she had now begun to identify herself with the American cause. Her only son, on whom she looked with all a mother's pride and fondness, was one of its defenders; and for his sake she could not but wish it success. Besides, the credit he had gained as a patriot soldier, had elated her feelings and warmed her heart for the cause in which he had acquired so much honour.

Her friend, Josias Ellwood and his family, with whom she resided, were of the Quaker persuasion, and abhorred war. Their sentiments were, therefore, like those of the majority of their sect, in opposition to the resistance which had been made to the claims of England. But their opposition, like their manners, was mild, and consequently ineffective; and they bore no one any personal hostility for opinions differing from their own. The pleasure, there-

Digitized by Google

fore, which Mrs. Meredith could not sometimes refrain from expressing at any success which attended the American arms, gave them no dissatisfaction, while she, on the other hand, from long habit and the remains of a prejudice still far from extinct in her bosom, could listen with complaisance and good feeling to encomiums on the government, the policy and the greatness of the British nation. It was with no unpleasant emotions, therefore, that she witnessed from the balcony of her friend's house, the triumphal entry of the British army into the city.

There was in company with Mrs. Meredith on this occasion, a young lady whose feelings, though essentialy patriotic, were not so inveterately such as to prevent her from enjoying the brilliant spectacle, and bestowing admiration on the gallant bearing of many of the officers, and the martial appearance of the whole army. To this lady, Mrs. Meredith was much attached, for she was no other than Miss Lewis, the fair sovereign of her son's heart.

A long line of infantry had just passed them, and a regiment of cavalry was approaching, when Miss Lewis observed, "Mrs. Meredith, yonder comes an officer whom, no doubt, you know. He is a relation of mine, and of yours too, I believe."

Mrs. Meredith looked in the direction point-

Digitized by Google

ed out by her young friend, and beheld Captain Harris, who that instant recognising the ladies, bowed to them with a gallant air. Miss Lewis returned the salutation; but the feelings of Mrs. Meredith would not permit her to be so complaisant to a man who had, according to information she had recently received, repaid the uniform kindness with which she had treated him, by the wanton destruction of her dwelling near the Brandywine. But her thoughts dwelt only for a moment on Harris, for she had encountered the gaze of an officer who rode beside him, which brought a crowd of disagreeable remembrances to her mind, and communicated to her an alarm which she endeavoured in vain to conceal. Miss Lewis perceived her agitation.

"You are fatigued, Mrs. Meredith," said she, "with this martial parade. Since it does not amuse you, let us retire from it.—But ah! do you see that noble looking officer beside Harris, who is gazing at us so intently? If he were not so bold, I should think him venerable, though it cannot be altogether with age."

"I know that man; at least, I am greatly mistaken, if I do not," said Mrs. Meredith in a low voice? "and notwithstanding your favourable impression of him, the cause of my uneasiness is that he seems to know me, for I have suffered much at his hands."

Digitized by Google

"I am sorry you should have cause to complain of such a brave looking man," returned Miss Lewis. "When his eyes caught mine they beamed with so much kindness and goodwill, that I was sorry when he rode past so that I could see them no longer."

Mrs. Meredith had by this time recovered her self-possession, and was unwilling to damp the enjoyment of her young and lively friend. She therefore in a tone of cheerfulness replied:

"Miss Lewis, I did not imagine that you had such a taste for antiquity. The object of your present admiration is assuredly more than twice your age."

"He is, therefore, the more fit to teach me wisdom," observed the young lady. "He appears neither handsome nor sprightly enough to win my heart—but I perceived something so kind and fatherly in his countenance, that I could readily yield him my reverence."

"It is well," returned Mrs. Meredith. "Since your heart is safe, you can lose but little by bestowing your reverence. But has no other of the gallant warriors in this brilliant cavalcade been able to vanquish you?"

"Not one, in truth," said Miss Lewis, gaily, well pleased to see that her respected companion had recovered her cheerfulness. "My whiggism is sufficiently strong to defy their whole army. I am resolved to yield to the attacks of no royalist, till the war be over."

Digitized by Google

"Hush! hush! you are speaking treason, child!" said Mrs. Meredith, playfully. "Remember you are now once more under the authority of king George. Behold the ensigns and the instruments of his power! How daring you are to speak so disloyally in the presence of so many thousands of his army, and in the hearing too of me who am one of his dutiful and liege subjects."

"Oh! I beg pardon!" cried the young lady, as a regiment of Hessians was passing. "I really forgot your toryism, and from complaisance to you I will not abuse those morose looking barbarians with the huge brass caps, terrific mustachios, and horrible music, sounding no note but 'plunder! plunder! plunder!' with horrible discord. Must I really call the monsters beautiful Christians, because they are servants of king George?"

"Oh, no!" returned Mrs. Meredith. "Do not offer violence to your conscience. I cannot carry my loyalty so far as to exact that. As for praising those outlandish, grim-visaged Vandals, why I would rather turn whig myself than commit such an offence against good taste.—But since the spectacle no longer affords us visions of the gallant and gay, let us retire from it while any agreeable impression of it remains on our minds."

"Yes; let us go. I am quite tired of the

Digitized by Google

affair," said Miss Lewis, "though I am glad that those frightful barbarians came in aid of my whiggism, lest the noble bearing of your bold Britons should have converted me into a tory."

"That compliment is for me; thank you, my sprightly whig," returned Mrs. Meredith, bowing, and they withdrew from beholding a scene with which each had now become heartily fatigued.

The next day, the officers of the army were billeted on the most respectable families of the city, and to the great surprise of Miss Lewis, he who had been the companion of Harris, and had excited so much of her attention and partiality, during the procession, presented his billet, announcing his name to be Sir Robert Radnor, and took his lodging at her father's house. Although she had received an account of him, from Mrs. Meredith, sufficiently unfavourable greatly to diminish her first partiality, yet in his manner of accosting her there was an undefinable something—a tenderness—a solicitude—mingled with a dignity of demeanour, which in defiance of her opinion of his unworthiness, restored him to her good graces, and awakened in her mind feelings of respect which seemed even to herself unaccountable.

Sir Robert was three or four days a lodger

Digitized by Google

in the family, before he spoke to Miss Lewis respecting Mrs. Meredith, although he well recollected to have seen them together on the balcony. At length he, apparently by accident, alluded to the circumstance, inquiring whether the lady's name was not Meredith, and whether she was a resident of the city? He received a suitable answer to the first question; but was informed that she had left town the day before, accompanied by several of her friends under protection of a passport from General Howe, for the residence of her brother-in-law, her own having been lately destroyed by her kinsman, Captain Harris, while he lay with his troop in the neighbourhood of the Brandywine.

"That was an unnecessary piece of wantonness on the part of Harris, for which he has since had good reason to be sorry," said Sir Robert. "It came to the general's ears, who reprimanded him severely; and were it not that Harris makes a good foraging officer, a qualification now of great value to our army, it is probable he would have been deprived of his commission. But Harris is a wild, thoughtless young man, and the lady's son is a violent rebel, which he thought justified the transaction; and which, perhaps, had in reality a palliating effect in the general's eyes."

"Then," observed Miss Lewis, "Harris

Digitized by Google

has been acquitted of an acknowledged criminal and malicious act, because he is a good plunderer, and the individual who has chiefly suffered from his malice is what you are pleased to call a rebel?"

"My fair young lady," said Sir Robert, "permit me to remind you, that the morality of peaceful times, cannot be always adopted in a period of war. Hence what is uniformly crime at the one time, may often be justified by imperious necessity, at the other."

"Sir Robert," replied Miss Lewis, "your greater knowledge of human affairs and usages, renders you so much my superior on these subjects, that I cannot pretend to argue them with you; but I believe, that the burnings and plunderings of predatory warriors, often do more injury than good to the side which resorts to them, by rendering the sufferers, and all who sympathize with them, more indignantly hostile than they would otherwise be."

"There is much truth in your remark," said Sir Robert, "and I must profess myself at least half a convert to your opinion. At all events it is an opinion so becoming your tender age and sex, that I should be truly sorry if you did not entertain it." So saying, he cordially shook hands with the fair moralizer, and departed to attend on some convivial en-

Digitized by Google

tertainment, a mode of expending time, which from the example of Sir William Howe, was now becoming very prevalent among the British officers in America.


Del
R 2
1842

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVI.

The onset took place, they met in the fray, and the strife was terrible. Behold two chieftains meet. The rest pause to witness the combat. It lasts not long. The sword of the one deeply pierces the breast of the other. But the victor is surrounded by foes. He has to yield to multitudes, and is subdued. What boots his victory, or the pain he has inflicted on a fellow-creature? Such are doings of men. Can beings of a superior nature look upon them with pleasure? Reason answers, "No." *Thaunus.*

A few days after the foregoing conversation, the sanguinary battle of Germantown took place, and produced two events highly agitating to the feelings of Miss Lewis. These were the capturing of Edward Meredith, and the severe wounding of Sir Robert Radnor. It was near the conclusion of the battle, and the American army was beginning to retire from the scene of combat, when a troop of their horse turned suddenly upon an advancing column of British cavalry, for the purpose of checking the pursuit, so as to gain time for the main body of the Americans to form into retreating order. The contest between the two cavalry parties was severe and bloody, but the British soon obtained a reinforcement, and their antagonists were obliged to give way. But their leader attempted again to turn them upon the enemy. A few only, animated with his own enthusiasm, obeyed his call, and with

Digitized by Google

rash impetuosity rushed upon the pursuers. Several of them fell to rise no more; and their chief, after having, in single combat, severely wounded an assailing officer, was taken prisoner. This was Edward Meredith, and the officer he had wounded was Sir Robert Radnor. Edward was but very slightly wounded, although his horse was killed under him before he surrendered. His preservation was owing to the magnanimity of the British General Gray, who had observed his bravery when assailed by superior numbers, and gave orders that he should, if possible, be taken uninjured. A heroic young officer overheard the order and gallantly undertook its performance. Mounted on a strong charger, he rushed between Meredith and his assailants, commanding the latter to withdraw, at the same time throwing his own sword on the ground, he held out his unarmed hand to Edward, who struck with the singular generosity of the action, and seeing himself on all sides surrounded by enemies, presented his sword and surrendered. This noble youth, to whose humanity Meredith was thus so much indebted, became afterwards well-known to history as the victim of an unhappy destiny, which will long continue to excite the sympathy of mankind—it was Major Andre.

Edward was for some days confined with the other prisoners of war, in the Walnut street

Digitized by Google

jail. But having several very warm friends among the tory faction in the city, powerful intercession was made to procure his enlargement on parole, which was granted within certain prescribed limits of the city. This indulgence rendered Edward happy; for it enabled him to enjoy the society of her, who was daily the first and the last in his thoughts—and to be with whom he could have cheerfully sacrificed every earthly consideration, except the performance of his duty to his country.

But Meredith did not enjoy this indulgence long undisturbed. The jealous eyes of Harris were upon him, and his malignant heart longed to do him mischief. Harris had ever since his return to Philadelphia, been vainly endeavouring to work himself into his former favour with Miss Lewis. He suspected that she was not unacquainted with his misdeeds in the neighourhood of the Brandywine, for she received his visits with much greater coolness than was consistent with her natural affability and habitual politeness. Since his rival's capture and presence in the city, she was even more than usually reserved, and seemed desirous of casting him off entirely from her acquaintance. He became, at length, so enraged by the preference which she so decidedly and openly manifested for Edward, that he determined to be revenged upon him, and effect his destruction, either by artifice or violence.

Digitized by Google

While Harris was darkly brooding over his malignant purpose, the unsuspecting object of his resentment was in the full enjoyment of that highest luxury which a youthful mind can know, the society and smiles of the chosen of his heart. One evening, in the beginning of December, he escorted her home from a theatrical entertainment in which the chief characters were performed by British officers, and at which he was induced to attend as a spectator, by the special invitation of his friend, Major Andre. Having left Miss Lewis at her home, he took his way to his own lodgings. His path lay along a considerable space of vacant ground since covered with houses, near the centre of which, in a lonely situation, stood a large deserted frame building. On reaching this building, the noose of a rope was suddenly thrown upon him, and he was dragged inside by three soldiers in masks, who hurried him through a dark passage to the top of a stairway, down which they caused him to descend into a cellar obscurely lighted by a glimmering lamp. Here, after binding his arms firmly with part of the rope, they secured him with the remainder to an iron staple strongly fixed in the wall.

To the demand which he made to know by whose order, or for what purpose, they committed this outrage, he was told that he need

Digitized by Google

ask no questions, for they were instructed to make no replies.

"Our job is now done," said one of them, after they had sufficiently secured him. "The rebel is snug enough till the Captain comes—let us be off." They then cautioned Edward, on the peril of his life, to remain quiet, and withdrew.

They had not been gone many minutes, when Edward's gloomy reflections on his unpleasant situation were interrupted by the sound of footsteps in the apartment above him, at first slow and measured, then rapid and irregular. They were accompanied by sighs and sorrowful ejaculations, of which, however, he could not distinguish the purport. These ceased, and all was again quiet for a short time, when a loud noise commenced like the breaking down of a partition or the bursting of a strong door, with a crash which shook the whole building. Instantly a brilliant light streamed down the stairway, and illuminated the cell in which he was confined. Heavy steps seemed to advance along the passage towards the stairway, which were suddenly arrested by an awful voice of unearthly sound, exclaiming, "Rash man! where goest thou? Fly from the dreadful deed thou dost contemplate, nor burthen thy soul with a heavier perdition than that which thou hast already earned!"

No answer was given. But the light in-

Digitized by Google

stantly vanished, and a rush of footsteps towards the door took place, when the ejaculation, in a tremulous tone, of "Awful Being, have mercy!" reached the ears of the astonished Edward, and immediately all was silent.

Edward had not time to recover from his astonishment sufficiently to form any rational conjecture respecting these mysterious occurrences, when he observed the figure of a man in black and masked in a black visor, descending the stairs. He approached with a large clasp-knife opened in his hand, and without speaking, hastened to cut the rope, and set Edward at liberty. Edward was about to express gratitude for this unexpected interference in his behalf, but his deliverer motioned to him to preserve silence and fly. He obeyed, and in a few minutes, reached his lodgings, where he passed a sleepless night, amazed and bewildered in his reflections on this extraordinary adventure. The next morning, he received, through an unknown channel, the following anonymous note.

"Your enemy, Harris, was the author of the attempt against you last night. Fear him not, nor inform any one of his villany. A power watches his paths, which has awed his soul, and will frustrate all his schemes. Leave him to his conscience and to God!"

With the information contained in this short

Digitized by Google

letter, unsatisfactory as it was in relation to the more mysterious parts of the adventure, Edward was obliged to remain content. It satisfied him respecting the author and the intention of the attack upon him; but its being anonymous rendered it unavailable as evidence against his enemy, in case he should complain of him to his commander. But, with the injunction of secrecy contained in the communication, he was resolved to comply. He, therefore, could not use any evidence, if he had it. To know that no new enemy had arisen against him was satisfactory. As for his old one, he could guard against him. Besides, he was told not to fear him, for his soul was awed, and his schemes would be frustrated. He had, therefore, no dread of any similar conspiracy being formed against him, by the same enemy, at least, for some time. In the meanwhile, some fortunate event might occur, which would place him beyond the reach of his foe, and restore him to liberty and the service of his country.

And was not Edward Meredith happy in his captivity, which was, in fact, but nominal, and which afforded him the society of the woman he loved? Could he be desirous of that liberty, which would banish him from the mistress of his heart? Sometimes, it must be confessed, in the weakness of his nature and the fervour of his love, he was tempted to prefer his present delicious thraldom, and would look for-

Digitized by Google

ward to the prospect of his enlargement, with reluctance and pain. But his mind was imbued with a strong sense of his duty to the cause he had espoused; and if he was an ardent lover, he was also an ardent patriot, and had heroism sufficient, at any time, when honour and his country called, to sacrifice the blandishments of love at the shrine of duty.

But the period of his release at length came. The defeat of a large detachment of the British force under Count Donop, in an attempt to storm the fort at Red Bank, threw into the hands of the Americans, several prisoners of distinction. Among others, Captain Harris was not only captured, but badly wounded. As his life was believed to be in danger, General Howe was anxious that he should have the benefit of the supposed superior skill of the British physicians, as well as of the greater attention and better accommodations he should receive in Philadelphia, among his friends, than at Red Bank, among his enemies. It was, in consequence, proposed to release Edward Meredith in exchange for him, a proposal to which General Washington readily assented; and Edward, on taking leave of his beloved Harriet, felt that even liberty was unwelcome, when it separated him from her sweet society. The mutual vow, however, was pledged, the parting embrace was given, the farewell was said,

Digitized by Google

and the painful separation accomplished. He grieved for a space; but his fortitude soon returned, more heroic feelings took possession of his mind, and with true joy and alacrity he resumed his former station at the head of his favourite troop.

The wound of Sir Robert Radnor confined him to his chamber, in the house of Mr. Lewis, for several months. During that time, he experienced from Harriet, a kindness and attention for which he was extremely grateful, and which contributed much to his recovery. His feelings towards this young woman were of a nature that he himself could not comprehend. They were such as he had never before entertained for a youthful female. They were not tainted with the selfishness which usually characterised his emotions. They had the ardour of affection, but not of passion. He wished for her welfare more disinterestedly than he had ever wished for that of any other person: and, in a will which he made while his life was considered in danger, he manifested his regard for her by a very liberal bequest.

Sir Robert was soon made acquainted, by means of Harris, with the partiality of his favourite for Meredith. He, at first, felt some dissatisfaction at the circumstance. It was from Meredith's hand he had received his almost fatal wound, and the insinuations of

Digitized by Google

Harris had given him an unfavourable impression of his antagonist's character. This impression, however, was soon changed. Meredith paid him frequent visits; and so earnestly expressed his regret at the accident which had brought them into contact on the field of battle, and had occasioned him to inflict such an injury on a near relation, that Sir Robert, whose pride and resentment were now chastened and mollified by sickness, not only forgave him, but extended to him his favour and regard. The mildness of the spring months restored him to partial health, but he never recovered sufficiently to undertake military duty.

The wound of Harris, although it confined him also for many weeks, did not inflict much injury upon his constitution, nor did it produce any beneficial change in his character or disposition. It is true, he suffered great internal inquietude from the dreaded visitations of the awful spectre which assumed the form of her on whom he had brought destruction. In all his dreams, and in all his solitary hours, that death-like form seemed to be present with him. On his couch of pain, he saw it, he heard it; he shrunk from its accusations, he trembled at its threats of vengeance; and its predictions of a terrible doom awaiting him, often forced the cold moisture of an unnatural perspiration from his agonized frame. Yet he

Digitized by Google

felt no penitence—he attempted no amendment. The selfishness of his nature caused him to dread the denunciations of the image that haunted him; but a genuine sorrow for the sufferings of her whose form it assumed, had taken no root in his bosom. The consequences of his guilt to himself alone were what he regretted. During the spring his health was perfectly restored, and with it, his taste for riotous enjoyments and intemperate gratifications. To these, as formerly, he had frequent recourse, for the purpose of driving from his recollection the mental impressions which, in his reflecting moments, so greatly disturbed his repose.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVII.

"Thomas," said my uncle, "you would have believed it, if you had read it in the Arabian Night's Entertainments, as having happened in China. But because it took place in our own plain and simple America, you think it a mere traveller's story. Yet I tell you, my boy, I saw it with my own eyes; and I affirm, and my friend of Germantown, the illustrious annalist of Philadelphia, will affirm also, that the palace of her Elephantine Highness of Siam, in rich substantial glory, is no more to be compared to the splendour of that great Gala, than the dim blinking light of our greasy lamps in Race street is to the bright blaze of the gas-shiners in Broadway." *Tales at Home.*

Towards the spring of 1778, the British General became convinced that the occupation of Philadelphia in no degreee promoted the subjugation of America. He had now possessed it for many months, yet the revolted colonies showed as little disposition as ever to submit. The folly of keeping a numerous and well-appointed army, at an immense expense to the British nation, idly lying in the midst of a large city, was now apparent, and was beginning to extort censures from every intelligent friend to the royal cause. By this time also, the British ministry had become sensible of the incapacity of Sir William Howe, to conduct the war in America, and early in May, he received an intimation that he should soon be superseded in the command of the army.

Sir William was a great favourite with his officers. He had, indeed, been an indulgent commander. Under his authority, and coun-

Digitized by Google

tenanced by his example, they had enjoyed a long season of gayety, joviality, and luxurious dissipation. When, therefore, the design of recalling him was made known to them, they resolved before his departure, to honour him with some brilliant testimony of their gratitude and regard. For this purpose, the celebrated entertainment called the MESCHIANZA was devised. It was a fete, which has been justly termed "the *most splendid* ever given by an army to their general." It was a medley of entertainments, consisting of land and naval spectacles, and triumphal processions, tilts and tournaments, banquets and balls, and fire works, in the most fanciful and imposing style of magnificence that a luxuriant imagination could devise, or the resources of a large and tasteful city could produce, when called into activity by the great wealth and unlimited authority of the projectors. The expense was borne by twenty-two officers, and to two of the most tasteful and ingenious of this number, the accomplished Andre and the gifted Delancey, the devising and arranging of the decorations were committed. Six marshals and four stewards were appointed to superintend the processions and entertainments, and to give order and regularity to the numerous company which was invited to the festivity.

At this day, there is to be seen, at the

Digitized by Google

southern extremity of Philadelphia, on the western side of Fifth street, a venerable building of large dimensions, which bears, among the populace of the neighbourhood, the name of "Duke Wharton's Castle." This edifice laboured long under the evil report of being haunted by the spirit of some person said to have been murdered within its walls. It was, in consequence, for many years uninhabited. It has lately, however, been taken into the public service, and now aids the cause of humanity, as an asylum for destitute and orphan children.

This is the remarkable mansion which, on the 18th of May, 1778, was selected to be the scene of the magnificent pageant and costly festivity under consideration. It was then, indeed, a noble mansion, the country seat—for many a green field, now covered with streets, lay between it and fair Philadelphia—of Marmaduke Wharton, Esq. This gentleman was friendly to the royal cause, and cheerfully permitted his residence to be used for the occasion.

Between this mansion and the Delaware, a distance of about three furlongs, the ground is extremely level, and at the time of the memorable gala of which we are writing, was far from being entirely stripped of its sylvan grandeur. On that day, in truth, it being the

Digitized by Google

season when forest verdure is in its prime, many a flourishing and picturesque group of oaks, and elms, and walnuts, and willows, which are now no more, ornamented the landscape, sheltering in their bosoms clusters of cottages, and skirting the numerous richly blossomed orchards and sweet-scented meadows that lay extended between them.

In making preparations for this splendid gala, the army of Britain was occupied for many days. The appartments of the mansion were decorated by the skill and industry of Andre and Delancey, both eminent scenic painters, whose taste gave to the whole fabric, the appearance of an enchanted palace. In front of the mansion was a beautiful flower garden, with fresh-trimmed walks, arbours and sylvan seats, amidst which, the most gaudy of the gay daughters of Flora, were then rejoicing in their vernal bloom. Eastward of this garden, and separated from it by an ornamented paling, an oblong meadow, of about four acres of ground, perfectly level, extended itself towards the Delaware. This was the field appropriated for the grand romantic tournament, in which the chivalric knights of "The Blended Rose," were to encounter those of "The Burning Mountain," in maintenance of the superiority in beauty and merit, of the ladies of their choice, over those of their antagonists.

Digitized by Google

Into this field, which was surrounded for the occasion, by a strong and high fence of palisades, there were four entrances—one at each side—with folding gates. At each entrance was placed a guard of twelve soldiers, commanded by a sergeant. The British banner raised itself loftily from the high posts, to which the gates were hung. It also displayed itself at each corner of the field, under the protection of a suitable guard.

At the eastern gate was a splendid triumphal arch, inscribed to Sir William Howe. It was erected on columns of the Tuscan order, and covered with branches of laurel, among which, various flowers, and particularly the red and white roses of England, were intermingled. On the top, the emblematic lion of Great Britain, pressed his rampant foot upon a succumbent globe. The titles of Sir William Howe, the victories he had gained, and his various civic as well as military merits, were emblazoned on the entablature of this arch in letters of gold.

At the western gate, which opened from the garden already mentioned, another triumphal arch arose, of a similar structure to the preceding, but with different emblems. It was dedicated to Lord Howe, the Admiral. It was surmounted by a very beautiful miniature ship of war, and each front was decorated with a handsome painting of Neptune, with his tri-

Digitized by Google

dent, ruling the ocean. Inscriptions eulogistic of Lord Howe's naval exploits, were conspicuously displayed on the entablature.

In the centre of this field, a portion of ground, somewhat exceeding half an acre, was marked off for the lists in which the champions were to exhibit their prowess. It was of an oval form, encircled by a range of posts tastefully painted, and connected by a circumference of strong net-work manufactured for the purpose. This area had also four gates corresponding with those of the larger field. The avenues leading from these gates crossed each other at the centre, where, by widening considerably, they left vacant a large circular space of green and smooth sward—the spot on which the gallant knights were to display their valour in daring tournament.

The sides of these avenues were bounded, partly by four platforms several feet high, and partly by palisade fences which connected them with the circumambient net-work. These platforms were constructed of wood, and overlaid with carpets. On each of them were erected four splendid pavilions furnished with seats, with cushions covered with richly coloured satin. Externally the pavilions were adorned with ribbons and fringes of gorgeous hues, intermixed with festoons of flowers and evergreens. They ranged north and south, and con-

Digitized by Google

sequently fronted each other east and west. Those on the west had on their tops, banners of white silk edged with scarlet; the banners of those on the east were of orange silk edged with black. These were the seats prepared for the fair ladies, in compliment to whose charms the knightly combat was to take place.

Immediately behind the pavilions on the north-eastern platform, was elevated a superb stage, accessible by several steps, and surrounded, save on the front or western side, by a handsome row of balustrades. On this were placed three splendid chairs, the central of which exceeding the others in magnificence, was appropriated for General Howe, that on the left for his brother, the admiral, and that on the right for Sir Henry Clinton. The residue of the area within the net-work, contained numerous ranges of benches and seats for the accommodation of the large and brilliant company of spectators and guests who had received invitation cards from the stewards and marshals. In the outer field also there were placed many benches, and high scaffolding on the back ground, for the accommodation of the promiscuous multitude that assembled from the city and adjacent country to witness the exhibition. To many of these, especially of the juvenile class, the numerous tall trees then growing in

Digitized by Google

the vicinity, afforded much facility for viewing the novel and brillant scene.

While artists and mechancis of various descriptions were busily employed in making preparations for this grand pageant, the sensation of high expectance, among all ranks and parties throughout the city, was very great. Many ladies and gentlemen were invited. Nor were these invitations, so far at least as regarded the fair sex, confined to the royalists. Many of the most fascinating belles of the day, were professed whigs, and to have omitted these in their invitations, would have accorded neither with the gallantry nor the inclinations of the gay Sir William Howe and his high-spirited officers. Among the whig ladies thus invited, we may readily suppose that Harriet Lewis was included. Her whiggism was not, indeed, of that obstinate description which would induce her to deny herself a pleasure of this kind. Yet she refused both the first and second invitations she received, because she wished not to confer any favour on those who tendered them. The first, from Harris, who eagerly seized this occasion to ingratiate himself in her esteem, she promptly rejected. The second was from a young officer who had, some time previous, made her an unacceptable tender of his love, and to whom she was now unwilling to afford any encouragement. With

Digitized by Google

such an ornament to their festivity, however, its projectors were resolved not to dispense. At their solicitation, Sir Robert Radnor presented her a card. He was an inmate of her father's house, he was advanced in life, and an invalid; and whatever might have been his conduct formerly, since she became acquainted with him, it had been such as to merit her approbation and esteem. She, therefore, with her father's approbation, consented to attend Sir Robert, and was immediately appointed one of the Nymphs of the Blended Rose, Sir Robert, invalid as he was, having resolved to become her knight.

The entertainments of the day began with an aquatic excursion, or "grand regatta." Soon after mid-day, the galleys and barges adorned for the occasion, with splendid streamers and trophies of naval triumphs, received their joyous company of fair ladies and gay gentlemen, from a wharf at the upper part of the city. Thence, in three divisions, rowing to soft harmony, they proceeded down the river. The first division was led by the Ferret galley, having on board Lord Cathcart, General Abercrombie, Sir Robert Meredith, and many other officers with their favourite fair. The Hussar galley which led the second division, contained Sir William Howe, Lord Howe, and Sir Henry Clinton, with the officers of their suite,

Digitized by Google

and their chosen ladies. Then came the Cornwallis galley with her division, freighted with gallant officers and the fair they loved. Each division was preceded by a barge with a band of music, whose measured cadences and swelling strains gave regularity and precision to the strokes of the well-trained rowers, who, with graceful action, moved them down the stream.

Around this gay assemblage of beauty and gallantry, armed barges, manned with marines, lightly floated in all directions to keep off the throngs of boats filled with beholders that pressed towards the procession. In this joyous and brilliant style, they moved forward, on the smooth bosom of the Delaware, in the view of thousands of admiring spectators, who crowded to the wharves, and filled the windows and balconies of all the houses within sight of the grand and novel spectacle.

Three ships of war, the Fanny, the Roebuck, and the Vigilant, with a long line of transport ships, lay at regular intervals in the middle of the broad river, highly decorated, their colours flying, and their yard-arms manned with the seamen, who, as the "grand regatta" majestically passed, uncovered their heads, and waving their hats, saluted it with loud cheers. But the principal cheering took place when the central division arrived opposite High street. Here, at a given signal, the pageant stop-

Digitized by Google

ped, and the blithe oars-men rested on their oars. Each of the war-ships then fired a salute, and all the bands played, "God save the king," which was followed by three distinct cheers from the seamen, and responded with long and loud acclamations by the exhilarated mulitude on shore!

At length, after floating proudly down the stream for nearly three miles, the galleys came to the appointed place of landing, at the lower end of the city, where the republican navy-yard has since been established. Here from the decks, the delighted company beheld the extensive mansion which was to be the scene of their festivity, with the royal standard of England waving from its towering roof, and announcing that it was ready to open its hospitable gates and receive them to the splendid entertainments now provided for them within its walls.

From the landing place to where the triumphal arch of General Howe, already described, was erected, a distance of about a quarter of a mile, there extended a sylvan arcade twenty-four feet wide. It was constructed of green branches from the adjacent woods, wearing their leafy honours, and enameled with flowers and blossoms in every gay variety that could be furnished by the genial month of May.

A carpet of green baize covered the whole

Digitized by Google

length of the arcade; and as the company passed,—for this was their way to the scene of festivity,—it was lined on each side within by a file of grenadiers, and protected without by several companies of light horse. Another salute of seventeen guns from the ships announced the landing of the gallant cavaliers and fair dames. The bands then struck up "General Howe's March," and the brilliant party proceeded to the "Field of the Tournament."

To describe minutely the magnificent dresses of the ladies and gentlemen on the occasion, would extend this account of the Meschianza beyond all reasonable limits. A very succinct notice of the costumes of the Knights of "The Blended Rose," and their antagonists the Knights of "The Burning Mountain," and of the dresses of the ladies whom they selected from among the Philadelphia fair, as the objects for whom they chose to combat, is all that can be given.

The White Knights, or those of the Blended Rose, wore coats of white silk with broad borders of scarlet, and epaulets representing white and red roses growing from one stem. The same device was displayed on their shields, and their heralds bore it aloft, in the form of a beautiful boquet embossed on satin, as the insignia of their order. The motto was "*We*

Digitized by Google

droop when separated." They were seven in number, and their chief was Lord Cathcart.

The Black Knights, or those of the Burning Mountain, were also seven in number. Their costume was black ground with orange borders, emblematic of a mountain in flames. A burning mountain was their heraldic insignia, and their motto, *"I burn for ever."* Captain Watson of the guards was their leader.

The ladies of the Blended Rose were dressed in Turkish habits of rich and gaudy silk, on which were embroidered garlands of white and red roses in many a bright and fanciful festoon. Their turbans were encircled with chaplets of the same gay flowers wrought in silk of the purest white and the gayest scarlet. In the front of the sash which encircled her waist, each had fixed the glittering present with which she was to reward her knight.

The ladies of the Burning Mountain were also in oriental habits; but the prevailing colours of their apparel were purple and orange. They also wore in their sashes the rewards to be conferred on their knights.

When the company entered the area prepared for the tournament, the marshals conducted the ladies to their pavilions. The nymphs of the Blended Rose were placed on the west side of the space marked out for the lists.

Digitized by Google

Those of the Burning Mountain were seated opposite to them on the east.

Sir William Howe, having ascended his chair of state, and the marshals having informed the heralds that every thing was prepared for the reception of the knights, those at the southern gate threw it open, and proclaimed that the White Knights were advancing. Immediately the sound of trumpets at a distance was heard, and in about a minute the champions of the Blended Rose entered, visored, and, underneath their tunics, vested in glittering mail, and nobly mounted on grey chargers richly caparisoned in their chosen colours of white and red. Each knight was followed by his squire on foot, in martial attire, carrying his spear and shield. Three times did they make the circuit of the lists, saluting the ladies on both sides, as they passed. They then took their station on the west, in a line with their own ladies.

Their trumpeters again sounded a long flourish, after which their chief herald made proclamation, in the name of the Knights of the Blended Rose, that "the Ladies of their choice excelled in wit, beauty and accomplishments, those of the whole world, and that they are ready to enter the lists against any knights who shall dare to deny the same, according to the ancient laws of chivalry." This challenge

Digitized by Google

being thrice repeated, the herald at the northern gate threw it open, and announced the approach of the Knights of the Burning Mountain. Presently the sound of trumpets was heard from that direction, and the Black Knights, preceded by their heralds and trumpeters soon entered. Their horses were jet black, but their caparisons displayed the brilliant flame of the orange: and their black armour was richly variegated with spangles of glowing gold. Like their antagonists, each was attended by his squire bearing his lance and shield; and like them, they rode thrice round the lists, each time making their obeisance to the ladies. They then drew up in front of their antagonists, while their herald proclaimed their defiance to the challenge of the White Knights, in the following terms.—"The Knights of the Burning Mountain will disprove, not by words, but by deeds, the vainglorious assertion of the Knights of the Blended Rose; and they now enter the lists to maintain that the Ladies of the Burning Mountain are not excelled in beauty, virtue or accomplishments, by any in the universe."

The chief of the White Knights then threw down his gauntlet, which the leader of the other knights instantly ordered his squire to take up. The trumpeters of each party now sounded a flourish, during which the squires

Digitized by Google

handed to their respective knights their shields and lances. These being fixed—the shields on their left-arms and the lances in their rests—a short pause ensued. Then, at a signal from the chief marshal, the Knights saluted each other by a movement of their lances, and wheeled round to commence their career. On their return, they encountered each other at full gallop, and their spears were shivered to pieces against their impenetrable shields. They again wheeled, and received pistols from their squires, with which they renewed the attack. The third attack was with swords, which furiously clashing against each other, or sounding upon the shields, produced an excitement and alarm among the spectators, almost as intense as the shock of a real battle.

At length, at a signal from Sir William Howe, the marshals proclaimed a parley, and each knight resumed his station. The marshals then, having conferred with the ladies, delivered their commands that "the knights should desist from further combat, for that the Nymphs of the Blended Rose and of the Burning Mountain, were perfectly satisfied with the proofs of love and feats of valour they had displayed."

At that instant, the whole company was thrown into confusion by one of the champions of the Blended Rose falling suddenly from his horse. Miss Lewis was much agitated on

Digitized by Google

learning that it was her knight, Sir Robert Radnor; and she was hastening amidst the crowd to his assistance, when one of the Black Knights, now dismounted, threw himself in her way.

"Sweetest Nymph of the Roses," said he, "whither fliest thou so hastily?"

"Knowest thou," she asked, "whether Sir Robert Radnor be much injured?"

"I know not, fair one," was the reply. "But why so solicitous about Sir Robert? Methinks a *melee* like this was an ill place for one so infirm as he."

Instantly a cry was heard among the crowd, "He is bleeding—he is wounded!" Quickness of thought was one of the characteristics of Miss Lewis, who was now aware that she was talking with Harris, whose hostile feelings towards Sir Robert, she strongly suspected.

"Methinks, Captain Harris," she said, "that you are not quite ignorant of the cause of this accident."

He started, as if stung by an adder, and forgetting himself for a moment, he exclaimed, "Beware of what thou sayst! Beautiful as thou art, such a charge is too serious not to be resented!"

"Resented!" cried a voice behind him. "Shame to thee, uncourteous and ruffian knight! Speakest thou so to a lady? Outside

Digitized by Google

of this thronged enclosure, if thou darest follow me, I will prove upon thy body, that thou art unworthy of knighthood."

Harris turned to the speaker, almost choked with rage. The countenance was masked, but the person and voice brought Edward Meredith to his recollection. "What! a rebel spy amongst us!" said he. "It would, indeed, be unworthy of knighthood to measure swords with a criminal so base. Thou art prey for the gallows!" So saying, he turned his eye in search of some subaltern officer whom he might charge with the custody of Meredith, for he felt assured of his identity, when a voice that sent a cold shuddering through his frame, addressed him:

"Beware! beware!" it said: "Wretch, thy own doom approacheth!" The speaker passed near him. It was the awful figure that was presented to his imagination in all his solitudes and serious hours. He saw it but for an instant; but that instant was enough to unnerve his frame. His limbs shook, and he fell to the earth with a groan which soon brought round him a crowd of spectators.

In the mean time, Meredith, having conducted Miss Lewis back to her pavilion, to which her father, who had attended as a spectator of the tournament, now came to take charge of her, was again mingling with the crowd,

Digitized by Google

when he became apprized that he was the object of suspicion to two officers who had overheard the words of Harris, and who were evidently watching his movements with close and alarming attention. He perceived his danger; but he lost not his presence of mind, and he fortunately applied to a source whence he procured the means of extrication from his perilous situation, in the manner which shall be hereafter related.

The wound of Sir Robert Radnor had evidently been made by the sword of Harris, who was his antagonist; but it was, even by himself, imputed to accident. A carriage was soon procured, and in company with a surgeon, he was conveyed to his lodging. Harris soon recovered; but the cause of his disorder remained unknown. One expression only which escaped him before he had gained his perfect self-possession, excited among those who heard it, much surprise and conjecture. "Friends!" he cried, "is that fearful spectre gone!" But instantly recollecting himself, he begged their indulgence. "I have been in a delirium" he said, "and I fear I shall become frequently liable to these fits." He then artfully inquired for Sir Robert Radnor, stating that his concern for the wound he had unintentionally given him, had been the chief cause of the mental disorder with which he had been attacked.

Digitized by Google

But, in truth, Harris, felt no sympathy for Sir Robert Radnor. He had, as Miss Lewis plainly intimated, wilfully inflicted the wound. His mortification at the preference which Harriet had shown for Sir Robert in accepting his invitation to the Meschianza, after rejecting one from himself, was exceedingly great, and he thirsted for revenge. He accordingly procured his enrolment among the Black Knights, knowing that Sir Robert was enrolled among those of the Blended Rose, with the view of encountering him during the tournament, and inflicting on him a mortal wound which might seem the result of accident.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII.

Dread shade! what mean'st thou? Hast thou not in secret
Tormented me enough? In the thronged hall,
Filled with the gay and giddy sons of mirth,
Can I not find a refuge from those looks
That wither up my strength, and make my thoughts
Intolerable to my own sensations? *Thaunus.*

For a tournament of gallant knights, in the presence of their fair ladies, to have terminated without bloodshed, or disaster of some kind, would have been altogether out of keeping. It would have betokened a sad degeneracy in the heroism, whatever improvement it might have indicated in the courtesy, of modern chivalry. The occurrences, therefore, related at the close of the last chapter, unexpected, and, to a few individuals, painful as they were, did not long interrupt the general hilarity of the company. On the contrary, it gave a characteristic piquancy to the scene, throwing over it an air of romantic fierceness, without which many would have pronounced it a dull spectacle, altogether unworthy of the genius of knighthood.

Fortunate events, therefore, having so far preserved the character of the fete, and rendered it satisfactory to all, its projectors highly delighted with their success, diffused their good

Digitized by Google

humour throughout the company, and proceeded, with elated spirits, to the remaining parts of the entertainments.

Accordingly, as soon as Sir Robert Radnor was removed, and Captain Harris's mysterious disorder had disappeared, the marshals arranged the company into proper order for proceeding to the festal halls. The knights having dismounted and sent away their horses, conducted their ladies, moving to the sounds of sweet music, towards the mansion. They passed, walking on handsome carpets, and the rest of the company following in regular procession, under the triumphal arch of Admiral Lord Howe, through the western gate into the garden in front of the house. Thence they proceeded up a flight of steps into the great hall, where the ladies being placed on elevated seats, conferred their rewards on their respective knights, who received them kneeling, and with fervent expressions of gratitude and everlasting devotion to the fair donors. The champion of Harriet Lewis being absent, his squire received the guerdon from her with the expression of suitable thanks, in his stead. The article thus presented was a magnificent broach of peculiar construction, which had that morning been given to her by her father for this purpose, and to which reference will again be made.

In this spacious hall and the four adjoining

Digitized by Google

rooms where the company were now assembled, and which were splendidly decorated, the walls being painted in imitation of Siena marble, enclosing festoons of white marble, refreshments of tea, lemonade, wine, &c. were distributed among the guests. After partaking of these, they were ushered up stairs, to an extensive ball-room, radiant and gay with costly effulgence. Its walls were painted in a light and elegant slyle, and hung over with eighty-five large mirrors, bedecked with a profusion of bright ribbons and gaudy flowers. Thirty-four splendid branches were prepared, when night should come, to banish her shades, and pour out a stream of radiance that should amply compensate the want of day. On the same floor were drawing rooms decorated and lighted in the style of the ball-room, and containing sideboards loaded with every species of luxury.

Soon the musicians poured forth their mirth-stirring strains, and the knights, with their ladies, commenced, amidst a scene of enchanting beauty, the exhilarating joyousness of the dance, which, for many hours, animated the gay and the gallant,

> Who flying on enjoyment's wings,
> Forgot the flight of time!

At length, about 10 o'clock, a pause in the buoyant mirth took place, and the entertainment was diversified by the opening of the

Digitized by Google

windows, and the presentation to the admiring spectators, of a splendid display of fire-works, sporting and wreathing their spiral forms in the field of the late tournament. These had been planned, with great care and skill, by the chief of the engineers. They consisted of twenty different sets of displays, chiefly radiating, in the innumerable figures they assumed, around the triumphal arches which were momentarily changed, as if by magic, into a brilliant succession of interesting shapes and devices.

At the hour of twelve, supper was announced, and instantly two large folding doors, before concealed, sprung open, and displayed to view, a magnificent saloon, constructed for the occasion, amidst the trees and shrubberies of an extensive garden behind the house. This romantic apartment was two hundred and ten feet long, forty wide, and twenty-two high. On each side were three alcoves in which were contained side-boards and shelves loaded with provisions, wine, and all the luxuries of the costly feast.

The sides of this great saloon were decorated with vine leaves, and chaplets of flowers and ribbons, intermixed with fifty-six large pier glasses, which, on each side reflected the gaudy scene of festivity in the centre, so as to entertain and bewilder the astonished spectator

Digitized by Google

with the view of three banquets in stead of one. Three hundred wax-tapers, in silver candle-sticks, placed along the tables; one hundred and twelve variegated branches ranged around the sides, two above each mirror; and eighteen gorgeous lustres of twenty-four lights each hanging from the ceiling, illuminated the magnificent scene,

> And taught the midnight hour's bewitching time,
> In radiant pomp, to rival that of noon!

Twelve hundred dishes covered the sumptuous tables, and the guests were attended by fifty waiters, twenty-five of whom were black slaves in oriental dresses, with collars of silver, and bracelets of gold.

The number of guests who sat down to this splendid banquet, were four hundred and fifty, about one hundred and seventy of whom were ladies, whose beauty, glowing amidst the effulgent scene, gave them the appearance of so many houries in Paradise.

At the close of the feast, a herald attended by trumpeters entered, and announced as the first toast—"The King and the Royal Family!" which was drunk with cheers, followed by the music of several bands playing the British national anthem, "God save the king." A succession of toasts followed, announced by the same herald, and honoured by a flourish of trumpets, and the swelling pomp of animating

Digitized by Google

music.—The feast being finished, the guests returned to the ball-room, and again drove thought away in the joyous agitations of the animating dance.

It was about three o'clock in the morning, and none of the gay company seemed yet to flag in their enjoyments, when a female figure of remarkable exility, dressed in white, and closely veiled, entered the splendid apartment. One of the heralds approached to ascertain her wishes.

"A boon! a boon!" she said, in tones so ethereally sweet, that they interested every auditor, "a boon, from your brave commander."

"Ask it, fair damsel!" cried Howe, advancing towards her.

"Permission, for but a few minutes, to tread a simple measure, in the dance, with a gallant knight in this assembly."

"Right fair and romantic!" exclaimed the jovial Howe. "Faith, this pleases me. It is a fine incident.—Your request is granted, lady. Choose your partner. Knights, stand forward!"

All the knights eagerly approached, anxious to be selected on an occasion so remarkable, except one, who, as if desirous to avoid observation, remained aloof amidst the crowd. He was one, on whose heart the stranger's voice had, indeed, produced an impression quite dif-

Digitized by Google

ferent from what it had communicated to the rest of the company. To him, the tones, though sweet, were unaccountably awful, and, although it was in the midst of a numerous assembly that he heard them, he feared to approach the being by whom they were uttered.

The lady looked upon the knightly candidates for her favour. "These are noble knights," said she. "But he with whom alone I am to dance, comes not forward. Yet my eye can reach him. Captain Harris, thou art the man!"

The eyes of all were turned upon Harris, and all wondered at his evident reluctance to be seen.

"Sir Harris, forward, like a true knight, at your lady's call!" cried Howe.

Harris obeyed. He felt ashamed that his agitation had been observed; and he was resolved not to appear afraid to accept a preference which, by any other officer present, he perceived, would have been considered a triumph.—Besides, why should this unknown lady cause him to feel disturbed? Her voice and form, it is true, resembled those of the awful spirit which, for many months, had haunted him, and rendered his life miserable. But her features were concealed, and it might not be she. Nay, it was improbable that it was she. Spirits are seldom, if ever, visible

Digitized by Google

to many individuals at the same time. But this lady was seen at once by a whole assembly.

These thoughts, passing rapidly through his mind, reassured him, and advancing with an effort towards the stranger, he offered her his hand, saying, "Fair madam, I am proud of your preference, and am ready to obey all your commands."

She declined accepting his hand. "Approach no nearer!" said she. "We dance together, but we touch not."

He acquiesced; for her voice had the power of a spell upon his spirit.

"Let your musicians play Lough Errock's Side, first in slow, and, then in quick time," said she to one of the heralds, who stood near her. "You know it was my father's favourite air," she added in a low voice intended for Harris's ear only. He started. The words sent a thrill of terror to his heart; for it informed him, that this was, indeed, the dreaded spectre of Mary Balantyne. The presence of his gay companions, and the commencement of the music, however, in some degree dissipated his terror. The injunction also to avoid all contact with his aerial partner assisted greatly to support him through the fearful task he had now to perform.

During the time the music played in slow

Digitized by Google

measure, the company was struck with the impressive solemnity of the lady's movements, which were also distinguished by a gracefulness that extorted unanimous admiration. So light and easy was she in her windings and progressions, that she seemed to swim along, rather than tread on the floor, and so accurate in the formation of the figures of the dance, that it might have been supposed, that she made perfection in the accomplishments of the ball-room, the chief study of her life. But, when the sprightly strain commenced, the spectators became really electrified with delight at her performance. Her agility and grace seemed truly preternatural. Harris was the only individual who felt no astonishment. He was, indeed, too much overawed to observe her excellence. But had it been otherwise, such excellence in the gracefulness and agility of the dance, would have been only what he had often rapturously witnessed in the performances of Mary Balantyne, when, in the days of her beauty and light-heartedness, she threaded the mazy rounds with her joyous companions on the banks of the Brandywine, and excelled them all.

She had danced about five or six minutes, when, on passing Harris in her course towards the door, which was open on account of the warmth, she, for an instant showed him her features by

Digitized by Google

a sudden movement of her veil, and disappeared with the rapidity of a flash of lightning. A shock went through his whole frame. He staggered some distance, and then fell convulsively on the floor.

For some minutes the surprise and confusion in the ball-room was so great, that no one thought of following the mysterious dancer. Exclamations of "Wonderful! Who is she? Who can she be? What has she done? What is the matter with Captain Harris?" were freely and abundantly interchanged. But no one could answer questions which every one was so eager to ask. All flocked towards Harris, partly from sympathy for his distress, and partly to obtain some explanation of the mystery. It was some time before he recovered sufficiently to converse in a rational manner, and when he did so recover, he was either unable or unwilling to throw any light on the subject. Before he regained his self-command he uttered several ejaculations relative to the torments to which he was subjected by the dreaded vision, which served only to increase the perplexity and give a dark cast to the surmises of the company.

On the restoration of his powers of reflection, his mortification became extreme. He dared not reveal the truth, and he was too much perplexed to invent an explanatory statement which might seem probable. Indeed, so

Digitized by Google

uncomfortable did he now feel, that, as soon as the amusements of the company were resumed, and attention began to be diverted from him, he withdrew, for the purpose of returning to his lodging, where he might, at least for a season, be secure from witnessing the disgrace or pity into which he conceived himself to have fallen.

After the preceding mysterious adventure, although the music and the dance were recommenced, the hilarity was gone, and the enjoyment could not be restored. The impression made upon the minds of even the most unreflecting of the company, by the singular conduct of the strange lady—her informal and bold self-introduction—her haughty and dictatorial bearing—her wonderful dancing—her rapid and unexpected disappearance—and the overpowering effects of her proceedings upon the mind of a reckless soldier like Harris,—all these produced a seriousness of thought which no attempt at the renewal of mirth could remove, and which were felt by all present to be so uncongenial with the gay and splendid scenes which surrounded them, and the mirthful purpose for which they were assembled, that, with common consent, shortly after the departure of Harris, they resolved to retire.

Thus terminated the brilliant feats and costly entertainments of the memorable *Meschi-*

Digitized by Google

anza of 1778, in Philadelphia. And thus closed the greatest and last exhibition of romantic grandeur, and extravagant folly, which this fair CITY OF INDEPENDENCE was ever to witness under a foreign rule; for in one short month afterwards, the gay soldiers of Britain departed, and, with them, every vestige of foreign authority, to return no more.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

Her memory brooded o'er her injuries,
And she beheld them so remediless,
That in her heart of sensibility,
Grief, like a poisonous worm, gnawed deep, and sent
A thrill of madness to her tortured brain,
And nerved her with an awful energy
To meet the horrors of that vengeful hour.
Thaunus.

Though Harris had left the ball-room secretly, he had not left it altogether unnoticed. There was one man whose observation he did not escape; it was the herald who addressed the mysterious lady on her entrance. Unperceived, he followed the steps of Harris, until the latter reached the place of the tournament, where the officers' servants were stationed with their horses. His servant, however, was not to be found. On inquiring for him, the herald who had purposely thrown himself in his way, informed him, that he was then in one of the recesses adjoining the banquetting saloon, so overcome with intoxication as to be unable to attend to his duty. "But," added the herald, "as I am now disengaged from my office, if you will accept of my service, I will attend you."

Harris accepted the offer. His horses were found in their proper place ready saddled. The knight and his attendant were soon mounted.

Digitized by Google

They proceeded by the eastern gate, through the triumphal arch of General Howe, along the sylvan arcade formerly mentioned, towards the Delaware. When about a furlong from the arch, their progress was suddenly interrupted by two men who sprung from amidst the bushes of the arcade, and seizing upon Harris, with the aid of the herald,—who had volunteered his attendance, after making his servant drunk, for the purpose of bringing him into this snare—in a moment gagged and pinioned him. They then hastened, the two assailants being also on horseback, towards the Schuylkill, which they passed a short distance below Gray's Ferry, in a flat boat which lay there ready to receive them.

After half an hour's brisk travelling, being then beyond all danger from pursuit, they removed the gag from their prisoner, but still kept him pinioned. The dawn soon began to appear, and Harris became convinced of what he had, even while it was dark, strongly suspected, that one of his captors was the man whom of all the human race he had most injured—the unhappy Balantyne. He shrunk conscience-struck and abashed from the first glance by which he recognized the grief-worn and now haggard features of the much-suffering victim of his ungrateful villany. The two others he knew not. It, indeed, occurred to

Digitized by Google

him that they were both disguised, their appearance indicating a much more advanced age, especially in the case of the herald, than was consistent with the activity and vigour they had manifested since his capture.

They were evidently not afraid of meeting with any enemy, for they passed on, with great confidence, in the broad light of day, scarcely seeming to prefer by-paths on their route. At length, on arriving at a tavern where they found a small party of Chester county militia on parade, who loudly cheered when they beheld the lately dreaded plunderer and devastator, Captain Harris, in custody, they halted for breakfast.

Balantyne here left them. "I will not," said he, "sit at the table and eat bread with the author of my daughter's ruin and of the dreadful anguish I have so long endured. I will go before you to the place of atonement. Guard him well, my friends, and let him be brought there by twilight this evening."

The herald now threw off his disguise, and appearing in the uniform of the militia volunteers of the district, was instantly known to the terror-struck prisoner, as William Barton, on whose father's family he had exercised such cruelty. The name of his other captor and guardsman was also no longer concealed. It was Francis Holmes. The plot which they

Digitized by Google

had laid to obtain possession of the person of Harris, having thus succeeded to their utmost wishes, they proceeded without delay to the performance of the remaining part of their designs against him. It soon indeed became necessary for them to depart with their prisoner, as several of the militia who had suffered much from his spoliations, began to clamour loudly for the infliction of a summary revenge. The address and management, however, of his active captors, extricated him from this danger; and they set out with him to the place of his destination, where they arrived at the time appointed by Balantyne.

The weather was fine; and the serene heavens and the verdant earth combined to exhibit one of the loveliest May evenings that ever adorned nature, as they approached the place. The scenery around was familiar to Harris, for he had often wandered amidst its beauties, in the company of Mary Balantyne; and he sighed deeply, when he reflected on the difference of his situation then from what it now was—and that difference, torturing conscience told him was the result of his own misdeeds.

At length, the travellers approached, by an obscure and indirect path through a thick wood, a small stone building, which Harris

Digitized by Google

knew to be the place of worship of a congregation of Presbyterians in the neighbourhood of Dilworth. In this sacred edifice, Balantyne himself, in virtue of his former ordination to the ministry, frequently in the absence of the regular incumbent, professionally officiated. Into this church Harris was now ushered. At first he perceived no one present, but his conductors. Solitude, silence and solemnity filled the holy place, and breathed an impressive, and to the wretched sinner who now entered it, a heart-chilling sensation of preternatural awe. On approaching the pulpit, however, Mr. Balantyne, who had been kneeling at his devotion when they entered, arose to view, and stood in the midst of it.

"Ah! art thou come, at length," said he, addressing himself to Harris. "I have long waited impatiently for this hour. It is now, hard-hearted and wicked man, that thou must atone for the grievous injury thou hast done my only child—the terrible calamity thou hast brought upon both her and me. Thou must now apply the only remedy in thy power to heal the cruel wounds thou hast inflicted. Thou must WED MY DAUGHTER!"

Harris started with astonishment at the strange injunction, and looking up to reply, he was struck silent with terror at beholding

Digitized by Google

Mary Balantyne herself standing beside her father.

"What sayest thou?" resumed Balantyne. "Wilt thou be joined in wedlock to this ruined one, thy own victim, and restore to her and to me at least part of that peace which can never altogether return?"

Harris now, with a great effort, assumed courage to reply. "Is this scene," said he, "real, or are the figures I behold the creations of my disordered imagination? Are ye what ye seem to be, mortal men of this world, and am I your prisoner? Or are ye but fancy-formed images, or beings from the dead, and I merely, the sport of an unhappy delirium? Answer me—tell me whether I am on earth in the presence of earthly beings, and not at this very moment, enwrapt in the frenzy of an awful vision? Speak, satisfy my doubts, and I will answer you."

"All that thou beholdest is real," replied Balantyne. "All present are heirs to mortality, and have yet to pass through the dark valley of death."

"Has not thy daughter been long dead? asked Harris: "Or have I been imposed on by false information?"

"I have had my revenge on thee," said Balantyne. "I have made thee suffer, till the moisture of mental agony has burst from thy

Digitized by Google

pores. That I may have atonement as well as revenge, I will now undeceive thee. My daughter, in her anguish, had taken a large dose of a deadly liquid. By my skill and care, the mortality it would have occasioned, was prevented. It caused stupor, which the bystanders mistook for death. I knew the ruin she had undergone—the disgrace she had suffered. But the world knew it not. I therefore determined to conceal it; and at the same time, formed the plan of tormenting thee, till thy conscience should be made sensible of thy guilt. A fictitious funeral was for that purpose exhibited; and by the aid of those bold men now standing by your side, the other parts of my design have been accomplished. My daughter's shame is unknown to the world. The issue of your crime had no living birth. Your victim herself is dead to the world, and her mind, like my own, I fear, is for ever dead to tranquillity. Such is our story; and such have been the bitter fruits of thy guilt. The customs of the country of my birth, make marriage, though not a full and perfect, yet a reputable and conciliating reparation, for guilt like thine and shame like hers. That reparation for our miseries, I now demand of thee. By the laws of our church and of this land, I am empowered to administer

Digitized by Google

the marriage rites. Wilt thou now yield to the ceremony?"

With the assurance that it was no spirit from an unknown world, whose visitations he had endured, the courage of Harris returned, and it was a quality in which, in regard to dangers arising from mere human hostility, he was far from being deficient. He was desirous to evade this proposal of marriage, conceiving that if he should become extricated from his present difficulty, the incumbrance with which his compliance would entangle him, might, at some future day, form a great impediment to his views and progress in life.

The unhappy Mary perceived his hesitation, and almost intuitively, she divined its motives. She hurried from her place in the pulpit. She stood beside her desolator, and with a wild energy, she exclaimed:

"Father! we will not be baffled thus by a wretch, wicked and remorseless. It is for thee I feel—not for myself. In the sight of Heaven and of angels, he has already acknowledged our union, and he then said, what I firmly believe to be true, that *it requires not the cold and cumbersome formalities of men to confirm our solemn nuptials* in the estimation of superior beings. But to diminish, even in part, the disgrace which weighs so heavily upon thee, my father, with these cold and cumber-

Digitized by Google

some formalities he shall now comply, or by the Eternal! who is worshipped in this holy place, he moves not hence with life!"

So saying, her form dilated, her eyes gleamed, her face flushed, and the preternatural force of an indomitable determination swelled and invigorated her whole frame, as to the astonishment and terror of all present, she drew from her bosom a dagger, which she held to the breast of her destroyer.

"Father!" she said, "proceed—impose upon us the obligations which, according to legal form, shall make us husband and wife; and, if he answers not properly thereto, this steel shall find his heart!"

Struck with her earnestness, her father proceeded with the ceremony, and overawed by her energy, her destroyer answered according to form, and the nuptial rites were completed.

"It is achieved!" she cried. "Father, your disgrace is wiped away. Now let me die! for I cannot bear to live the wife of a wretch like this. But shall he live to triumph in his escape from me? No! angels, witness that he shall not!" Like lightning her dagger pierced his heart, and the blood which it drew thence was, the next moment, mingled with the blood of her own.

The rapidity with which these fatal and unexpected blows were given, rendered their prevention by the by-standers altogether impossible. Her

Digitized by Google

horror-struck father gave a heart rending groan and fell in a swoon upon the bleeding body of his child. Francis and Barton were also for some minutes struck motionless with terror. On recovering their presence of mind, they hastened to remove the father to his own dwelling, which was at no great distance; and as the shades of night were fast approaching, this they were able to effect without occasioning any alarm in the neighbourhood. At the midnight hour, they privately buried the corpse of the lovely, unfortunate Mary, in the grave where, in the opinion of the world, she had already mingled with her parent earth.

> At length she rests, each sad pulsation o'er,
> Her once loved form to kindred dust returned;
> Man shall deceive her ardent heart no more,
> For quenched the flame that in her bosom burned.

Francis at first proposed to bury Harris in some corner of the same grave-yard that contained Mary Balantyne; but her lover, Barton, thought that it would be a profanation of the sacred ground. Francis also considered that there would be less risk of the grave being discovered, and suspicion thereby excited towards the awful catastrophe which had taken place, if the corpse should be elsewhere deposited. With careful privacy, therefore, it was conveyed to an obscure dingle overgrown with tall and dusky pines, and there interred where no memorial shall ever direct a mourner to

Digitized by Google

drop a tear over the dark grave of the betrayer of female innocence, and the victim of female energy executing justice in the midst of madness.

CONCLUSION.

The wound which Sir Robert Radnor had received from Harris at the MESCHIANZA, was too severe for the already shattered state of his constitution long to support. It was some weeks, however, before any very alarming symptoms appeared. The day after the fete, he was in tolerable spirits; and was much pleased when his esquire visited him for the purpose of delivering to him the favour he had received in his name, from Miss Lewis, after the tournament. But what was his astonishment, when in this gift he recognized a costly transparent brooch, encircled with diamonds, which he had presented to his first wife on her wedding day about nineteen years before. At his request, Harriet was soon in his presence.

"Miss Lewis," said he, "let me thank you for this very acceptable favour. The honour of receiving it from you on this occasion endears it greatly to me. But it is very dear to me on another account. It was a marrige gift from

Digitized by Google

me to my first wife. Here are the initials of our names; and I see the portion of her dark hair which I caused to be embedded in the centre of the jewel. My dear Miss Lewis, a thousand thousand thanks for this precious relic! Can you let me know any thing of its history?"

Mr. Lewis, who had just a few moments before entered the apartment, replied to this question:

"Sir Robert," said he, "I alone can give you the history of that brooch; and it is expressly to do so that I now visit you. It was once, as you have discovered, the property of your wife. At her death it became the property of mine, who was her sister; and it is now bestowed on you by your own daughter."

"My daughter!" exclaimed Sir Robert. "Is Harriet my daughter? I was informed that my child had died. But no—it must have been an error. I see—I feel I have a child. Come to me, Harriet! Embrace your father. I see your mother's looks and form perfectly imaged in yours!"

"Father!" said the astonished Harriet to Mr. Lewis. "Is this so? Are you not my father?"

"My child, no; except in true affection. Sir Robert Radnor is indeed your father!" said Mr. Lewis, evidently very much affected.

But the joy of Sir Robert knew no bounds.

Digitized by Google

He pressed his daughter to his bosom. "Heaven be praised," he exclaimed, "for his goodness in giving me such a child, the express likeness of her beautiful mother—and good, too, like her!—Oh! my child, there was surely some latent presentiment of this happiness in my heart, from the first moment I saw you; for ever since then, I have borne for you a father's love. And you have shown for me a daughter's duty."

"And I have," she replied, "felt a daughter's affection, with a force of sympathy which was to myself unaccountable."

"You will wonder," said Mr. Lewis, "that I did not sooner apprize you of this connexion, when I acknowledge that it was always known to me. My reasons may not speak much for my candour and disinterestedness. Yet I will avow them. In the first place, my affection for Harriet is truly parental. I have never had offspring of my own; and from her infancy, she has been to me instead of a daughter. I felt reluctance, by disclosing the truth, to dissever the endearing ties which bound her to me. Secondly, Sir Robert, you will excuse me for saying, that the motives which induced her grandfather to give you wrong information in relation to her death, continued, until very lately, to influence me. You had left your wife in Albany, in a delicate state. She wrote

Digitized by Google

often to you, but received only one or two short replies. She died in child-birth, recommending her offspring to the care of her father. His feelings not being the most favourable towards you, he did not wish to be disturbed with your claims upon the tender plant, the rearing of which he resolved to undertake. He, therefore, deceived you, in respect to its existence. I shortly afterwards, married his only other child, your wife's sister, whose strong affection for her little niece, was gratified by her grandfather permitting her to reside with us. At his death, which took place many years ago, the old gentleman divided his property between Harriet and my wife. Shortly after that event, we removed to this city. My wife died a few years since, and there now remains with me no one on earth, save Harriet, on whose attachment I can place value or repose confidence. I trust that this disclosure will not deprive me of that filial regard which has so long afforded me happiness, and which has become necessary for the comfort of my remaining days."

"Never," said Harriet, embracing the good old man, with tears of tenderness in her eyes, "never shall I withdraw from you the care, the attention, and the affection of a daughter."

"Your parental care of my child," said Sir

Digitized by Google

Robert, "excites my warmest gratitude. But let me remark, as to my apparent neglect, in corresponding with her mother, that the hurry and excitation of the very active and harassing service in which I was then engaged, prevented my writing so often, and at such length, as I could have wished. Yet I, in truth, wrote more and longer letters than she appears to have received. The troubled nature of the times and the insecurity and difficulty of mail conveyances at that period, may well account for the miscarriages which took place. However, as the past cannot be recalled, regret is useless. And since Providence has had in store for me so great a blessing as that of a daughter of whom I have so much reason to be proud, I will endeavour to be duly thankful, and shall cherish the precious gift with affection and delight."

But Sir Robert was not fated long to enjoy the society of his new-found daughter. His general debility was daily increasing. So feeble was he, indeed, when the British army left the city, that he was unable to accompany it. He, therefore, resigned his commission, and remained with his daughter.

Immediately after the American troops repossessed Philadelphia, Edward Meredith, accompanied by his mother, visited their suffering relative, between whom and Mrs. Mere-

Digitized by Google

Frances Minor 1839

dith, a reconciliation, much to their mutual satisfaction, took place.—Edward was now once more in the full enjoyment of the society of his beloved, with the additional advantages of being a free man, and having nothing to fear from the presence of armed foes or a ferocious rival. He informed Harriet that he had been encouraged to visit the Meschianza from the facilities afforded to his admission by William Barton, who, having entered the service of Captain Delancey, as a royalist, had been appointed one of the heralds. The practice of wearing masks, which it was known would be permitted to the guests, offered a disguise of sufficient security, provided no accident occurred to excite observation, "and that," said he, "I was willing to risk for the pleasure of beholding you as a Nymph of the Blended Rose, and the other glories of the day. I had nearly, however, paid dear for my gratification. Immediately after the encounter with Harris, Barton whispered to me that the attention of some officers was directed towards me, and that if I did not instantly fly, I should be apprehended as a spy. I perceived the officers to whom he alluded. To fly would have been ruin, for it would have confirmed their suspicion. I observed my friend, the generous Andre, near me. In my perplexity I resolved

Digitized by Google

to throw myself on his mercy, and claim his protection.

"My God," said he, in a low voice, "what imprudence! Meredith, you are lost. But stay; I will lull their suspicion, and get you off safe, if I should die for it. Be my equery for a moment: it will show them that I know you, and will remove their suspicion."

"I caught the reins of his horse. He dismounted, and hastening to General Howe, requested a passport to enable a friend desirous of hastily visiting a sick relation in the country, to pass the pickets on the lines. He obtained it, and returned. "Stay not," said he, handing me the paper; "and avoid loitering for my sake, as well as your own, for should you be detected, it will go hard with me for imposing on the General."

I pressed his hand in token of gratitude, and in half an hour was beyond the reach of danger.

"Heaven bless the noble-minded youth," said Harriet. "He is, and he deserves to be, beloved by every one. He was throughout, the animating spirit of the gay entertainment. In his own need may he never want a friend, nor in his danger a protector!"

Meredith, with his whole heart, responded the fervent prayer. Alas! what sorrowful regret would the hearts of sympathizing thou-

Digitized by Google

sands have been saved from suffering, if it had pleased Providence to have granted that earnest petition, and to have ordained that the traitor of West Point, and not the spy, might have been the victim.

The end of Sir Robert Radnor was drawing near. He became conscious of it; and under the impression of this consciousness, one day towards the latter end of June, he called Edward and Harriet into his presence.

"My children," said he, "I feel that I have not long to live. But I have become resigned to the inevitable dispensation. It is a great consolation that my last hours shall be spent in your society, and that my dying eyes shall be closed by the hands of my own child. My worldly affairs are all settled, save one important matter; and when that shall be transacted, I shall be no longer burthened with temporal cares. I know your mutual attachment. I approve of it. I rejoice at it; and I wish your nuptials to take place without delay, that I may have the satisfaction, while I yet live, of witnessing your happiness, and of winding up my concerns with this world, by pronouncing my blessing upon you as my son and daughter."

In consequence of this request, Edward Meredith was soon made happy in the possession of his lovely bride.—How different was his lot from

Digitized by Google

that of his gay, accomplished, but unprincipled rival! Fair, direct, and manly perseverance in active duty, brought happiness to the one, while the indulgence of fierce passions and the commission of insidious crimes brought destruction on the other. Thus, even in this world, unerring justice may raise her scale and weigh the actions of men, in order to assign to them their due proportion of punishment or reward. That it is often otherwise, is equally true; for here is not the consummation of things. We are here but in probation. The final decision and distribution are reserved for a more lasting state of existence.

Were it not so, oh Balantyne! who could reconcile thy virtues and thy sufferings, with the impartiality of Eternal Justice? How few of mankind have been more guiltless! yet how few have endured more misery! And what supported thee amidst the fiery trials, and prevented thee from sinking under the terrors of despair?—what but thy Christian confidence in the due apportionment of the claims of justice, which the Unerring Ruler of all will yet make throughout his universal Creation!

Soon after the catastrophe which deprived the sensitive and much-enduring Balantyne of his last worldly comfort—his only child—he removed for ever from the scene of the terrible calamity. Philadelphia was his

Digitized by Google

retreat. There he resided for many years, leading a life of contemplation, and almost entire seclusion from the world.—It has already been stated that from the papers left behind him, at his death, this history has been compiled. And it is hoped that, while the narrative of his sorrows shall awaken the sigh of pity in warm and generous hearts, the example of his endurance will teach fortitude and resignation to those stricken spirits who are destined to bear the storms of adversity, so that, like him, although they may grieve, they may never despair; but be supported through all their sufferings, by the consoling assurance of RETRIBUTION HEREAFTER.

C. W. Nassau jr
Nassau Hall
Princeton. N.J.
1861

THE END.

y bride.—How different was

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
32101 007188673

Digitized by Google